THE REVIEW OF THE
roots of [illegible] violence

volume 1
FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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LITERATURE REVIEWS

THE HONOURABLE ROY MCMURTRY　　DR. ALVIN CURLING

Ontario

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Chapter 1:

Introduction to the Report

Ontario is at a crossroads. While it is a safe place for most, our review identified deeply troubling trends in the nature of serious violent crime involving youth in Ontario and the impacts it is having on many communities. Those trends suggest that, unless the roots of this violence are identified and addressed in a coordinated, collaborative and sustained way, violence will get worse. More people will be killed, communities will become increasingly isolated and disadvantaged, an ever-accelerating downward cycle will ensue for far too many, and our social fabric as a province could be seriously damaged.

To open the door for this kind of review required wisdom and foresight. We commend Premier Dalton McGuinty for asking the bold questions that led to these conclusions. In an era when many seek short-term political gain by simply calling for more law enforcement, despite chiefs of police stressing that "we cannot arrest our way out of this problem," the Premier took a different approach. He gave us a wide mandate and full independence to look at where the violence is coming from, and to identify ways to address its roots, in order to advance the health, safety and long-term prosperity of Ontario.

This has been a most challenging assignment. Ontario is a large and diverse province. The issues are interconnected and controversial. Time was limited, and both the pressures and expectations have been high. We nonetheless thank the Premier for the opportunity he gave us to explore the deep and complex issues that lie behind the roots of violence involving youth.

We describe in our report the process we followed to understand those issues. In a little over 10 months, we or our staff met with over 750 people, whether in their individual capacities or as representatives of organizations. We met with more than a dozen Ontario deputy ministers, several on more than one occasion. We met with Ontario's Poverty Reduction Committee and its political and public service staff, and separately with certain Cabinet ministers. And, as directed in our mandate, we established a strong working relationship with the City of Toronto and the United Way, whose leadership on these kinds of issues is well-known.

We also commissioned a youth-led neighbourhood insight process to delve, as deeply as time permitted, into the issues facing eight neighbourhoods in the province. We engaged the Grassroots Youth Collaborative, a consortium of highly diverse youth-led organizations, to help us hear youth voices in Toronto that might otherwise not have come to our attention. We also engaged the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres to bring us the views of urban Aboriginal youth from across the province.

As well, we commissioned five major research papers and two comprehensive literature reviews, obtained 11 background papers from Ontario ministries, provided provincewide access to our work via a website, an online survey and a 1-800 number, and travelled to England to better understand some particularly relevant approaches there.

Nonetheless, we do not profess to have studied all that could have been studied, nor to have met with all who could have helped us with our task. We have almost certainly not done full justice to the work of all who shared their ideas and insights with us and may have failed to fully credit everyone whose ideas inspired us.

In all of our work, we joined a conversation rather than started one. We have been encouraged by the large number of people, most certainly including youth, who are bringing expertise and energy to bear on the issue of violence in Ontario. They include people within all orders of government, in community agencies and organizations, and in communities themselves. We have also been encouraged by the commitment the Premier has shown to addressing some key aspects of this issue in recent initiatives such as full-day learning for four- and five-year-olds and the appointment of a Cabinet committee to develop "a focused poverty reduction strategy with measures, indicators and reasonable targets by the end of 2008."

For reasons we discuss in our report, we focused on the most serious violence involving youth. We also address the other forms of violence that can be its precursors, but consider the heart of the matter to be those youth who are so alienated and disconnected from our society that they carry guns and often use them in impulsive ways, demonstrating indifference to the consequences and placing no value on human life. We inquired into the mindset of those youth and, from that analysis, we identified the immediate risk factors for their behaviour. This then led us to the roots of those factors and to actions to address those roots.

We found the roots to be extensive and pervasive. They permeate society, but are intertwined and particularly virulent in certain neighbourhoods, and made worse everywhere when they include racism. Our core finding can be simply stated: neither the breadth nor the depth of the roots is taken into account in shaping public policy in Ontario. The initiatives underway to address various aspects of them are largely inadequate for the task, and there is no structure to give coherence to those initiatives. Overall, Ontario has not recognized how vital it is to the health of this province to put an aligned and sustained approach to the roots of violence involving youth at the heart of the government's agenda.

In reaching these conclusions, we did not adopt a rigid definition of youth. The roots of the immediate risk factors can take hold even before birth and continue to pose threats all through a child's life. Similarly, there is no accepted upper limit on who should be considered a youth, and we do not propose to create one. Certainly, the definition should go beyond the age limit for the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* (18), up to some point in a youth's early to mid-20s, but there is no benefit in trying to be more precise than that in looking at violence involving youth and considering actions to address its roots.

In approaching our work, we were asked not to reinvent the wheel. We found little need to do so. Good work and good ideas abound. To work with that metaphor, we found many excellent "wheels." The problem, however, is that they are not all connected to the same vehicle, and those that are on the same vehicle frequently have separate steering systems and often separate drivers with different ideas of what the destination is and how to get there.

That is why we give the highest priority to governance, and otherwise tend to provide more advice than recommendations. What matters most is getting the wheels onto vehicles that are following an agreed-upon map to a shared destination.

We are confident that the destination we describe in our report is the right one. It focuses on repairing a social context that is broken for many youth; strengthening neighbourhoods and community agencies; establishing clear outcome goals for initiatives for youth; providing youth with engagement, hope and opportunity; and aligning the provincial ministries to deliver a coordinated, collaborative agenda of change over the long term, including by working effectively with other orders of government and community residents.

Having described that destination, we are largely content to leave the details to the planning process we describe in the balance of this report. We do not make a lot of detailed recommendations because so doing would suggest that there are neat, discrete solutions to problems that are deep and intertwined. In our view, only an integrated, collaborative and sustained approach to the roots will succeed. That is why we propose a body at the centre of government with the mandate and resources to consider our advice, situate it within the context of the balance of the government's agenda, determine priorities, make linkages among ministries and with other governments, and manage a process of both building and being responsive to communities across the province. Only this kind of body and approach will be able to produce a coherent, long-range plan for the province, set agendas for ministries individually and collectively, establish overall and interim targets and monitor work towards them to ensure an aligned and sustained response.

We are confident that, with this kind of strong coordination and leadership, we can rely upon Ontario's ministries and their partners to do the detailed planning required to respond to the advice we offer throughout our report. This need not be a lengthy exercise, but it will call for a major focus from many ministries. Given that focus and the leadership structure we propose, we believe that the planning exercise can be completed, and the plans made public, by May 2009.

In the result, the recommendations we make to the Premier emphasize the need to recognize the breadth of the issues and to address them by creating significant new governance mechanisms to coordinate the energy and capacity that are waiting and eager to take on the work that must be done.

We conclude this introduction with a brief acknowledgment of the tremendous work and dedication of those who accompanied us on our journey, starting with those who were with us full time. In alphabetical order, they are Jim Cowan, who led our communications and consultations process, drafted the Community Perspectives Volume and pulled together much of chapters 5 and 8; Lu-Anne Dacosta, who provided advice in a number of areas and helped in particular with Chapter 2 and the analysis of the previous reports for Chapter 6; Doug Ewart, who was responsible for our overall analytical framework, provided ongoing policy advice and drafted most of the main volume of the report; Irwin Glasberg, who led our team, maintained liaison with the government and managed the review through a complex and challenging time; Roxanne Kalimootoo, who assisted with the administration of the project and provided expert advice on issues, including racism and education; Lorrie MacKinnon, who also assisted with administration, managed our procurement processes, helped analyze previous reports for Chapter 6 and managed the publication of our report; and Roberta Ross, who provided high-quality and high-energy administrative support to the entire process.

On a part-time basis, also in alphabetical order, we had the benefit of strong administrative support from Judy Bew at the Gowlings law firm; of the important perspectives of Ryan Charles, a high school co-op student; of the analysis of stakeholder input provided by Arda Ilgazli, a Cabinet Office intern; of ongoing policy advice from Kevin King, a public servant with wide experience and excellent contacts in the areas of youth, race and violence; of the steady guidance and wise advice of Lynn Mahoney of Gowlings; of strong administrative support from Sandy Prosa of Gowlings; and of the skills and professionalism that Mary Roy brought to preparing most of the manuscript.

We also wish to acknowledge four other individuals who worked with us and made a major contribution to our work. Frances Lankin of United Way Toronto and Nancy Matthews of the City of Toronto participated in several of our meetings and policy discussions, accompanied us to England and provided wise and insightful strategic advice on many key issues. Alan Riddell, former director of the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit in England, provided very valuable information and briefings in Toronto, helped plan our meetings in London and accompanied us to most of them, and contributed important insights and policy conclusions on key U.K. initiatives. Prof. Scot Wortley from the Centre of Criminology at the University of Toronto provided strong and experienced research support to our review, participated in many of our meetings, authored two literature reviews and a significant paper, and contributed the expertise he has gained in his years analyzing many of the core issues we had to confront.

We also wish to acknowledge the brief but important contributions of three individuals at both ends of our project. At the outset, Debbie Strauss and Elizabeth Kay-Zorowski provided significant startup expertise, and, towards the end, Jill Arthur devoted several weeks to helping prepare what is now Chapter 8 of the report.

Finally, we wish to express our sincere thanks to Canada's High Commissioner in London, James R. Wright; his acting deputy, Bob Rochon; and political officer Gillian Licari of the High Commission, who made inspired contacts and superb arrangements for us in London and, as well, provided gracious hospitality to us and a number of those we met.

We have already noted our debt to the large number of individuals and organizations who met with us or made written submissions to advance our work. We have listed them in Appendix 2 and thank each of them sincerely for their time and expertise, and for the trust they placed in us. We could not have produced this report in the time available without the unfailing dedication and commitment of all of these individuals and organizations.

Chapter 2:

How We Conducted our Review

Introduction

Premier McGuinty launched our review in June 2007 because he felt that "no parent should ever have to worry about losing their child to violence" and that we all have a responsibility to do everything we can "to make children, schools and communities safer … and help young people make good choices" (Premier's announcement, June 11, 2007). The Premier initially requested that we provide him with a report in May 2008, but the scope of the work and the number of people wanting to meet with us necessitated a short extension to September.

Over the summer of 2007, we worked with the Ontario government to establish a Roots of Youth Violence Secretariat to support our work. Based in the government's Cabinet Office and headed by an assistant deputy minister, the secretariat brought together a small, diverse and dedicated team from several parts of the Ontario Public Service. The secretariat, in turn, retained University of Toronto professor and criminologist Scot Wortley as a research consultant. A Toronto high school co-op student and a student intern also joined the team for a term each and helped bring a youth perspective to the review.

Following this and other preparatory work in July and the first part of August 2007, including meetings with deputy ministers from the most affected ministries, we met in late August with our secretariat for an intensive, facilitated project planning session. This session produced a national and international research plan and a provincewide consultation agenda to guide our work.

With this initial attention to the entire province, we also began to implement the direction in our mandate to work closely with the City of Toronto and the United Way, both significant service deliverers and community builders with substantial expertise in the issues facing us. The City and the United Way Toronto became key partners in our review, and their expertise, experience and research in many relevant areas, including youth violence, social exclusion, disadvantaged neighbourhoods, and youth and community development, were invaluable.

By early September, we were well on our journey towards the daunting objectives the Premier set for us. He asked us to do two very challenging things. First, he asked us to examine violence involving youth and understand where it is coming from (its roots). And second, he asked us to recommend how the Province can move forward to create opportunities for youth to maximize their potential and make schools and neighbourhoods safer and healthier places for youth to flourish. Our full Terms of Reference can be found in Appendix 1. To carry out this assignment, he asked us specifically to:

- Consider existing provincial investments and programs related to child development, youth violence, youth at risk and creating educational and employment opportunities for young people
- Assess approaches used in other jurisdictions to evaluate the potential for successful application in Ontario's context
- Identify further opportunities for prevention and the rehabilitation of youth, and
- Make recommendations on:
    - Meaningfully engaging youth, communities, leaders, faith-based groups, neighbourhoods, police and social services agencies in developing common outcomes and objectives
    - Improving coordination between governments and with community agencies in planning and delivering programs
    - Immediate and longer-term actions and solutions involving all related parties, including governments, communities and the private sector, and
    - Ongoing mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating effectiveness of investments, programs and services.

As we began to come to grips with this broad assignment, it was quickly apparent to us that inequality, disadvantage and racism are tightly interwoven into many of the roots of violence involving youth. Our interest in finding responses to these systemic issues did not start with the Premier's request to us, nor will it end with this report. We agreed to undertake this work precisely because of our long involvement in and concern about these kinds of issues, and because, as we set out in Chapter 5, we believe that Ontario is now at a crossroads from which things could get very much worse if the right action is not taken now.

How the Review Was Conducted

To carry out our mandate and obtain the necessary advice and expertise on a wide range of issues in the very short time available, we adopted a five-part strategy:

1. involve youth and obtain their perspectives and advice
2. hold facilitated Neighbourhood Insight Sessions, organized primarily by local youth, to hear neighbourhood perspectives on violence involving youth
3. conduct research in a number of areas related to violence involving youth
4. engage in focused consultations with as many key informants and groups as possible within the time available to us, and
5. provide provincewide access to our work through a website, an online survey and a toll-free telephone line.

1. Involving Youth

We could not hope to understand violence involving youth without talking with and, most importantly, listening to youth. Particularly important was hearing from the most affected youth not only about their experiences with violence, but also about how they are dealing with — and sometimes overcoming — violence in their communities.

To that end, we met with a substantial number of youth and, as discussed below, ensured that their voice was front and centre in our Neighbourhood Insight Sessions. We also consulted with youth workers and other experts in youth engagement, and benefited from youth participation in our daily work at the secretariat. In these ways, we had the ongoing opportunity to hear from youth about the impact of violence on them and their communities. We also got their input on ways to address it at the local and provincial levels.

To add to these strategies to hear the youth voice, we commissioned the Grassroots Youth Collaborative (GYC), a culturally and racially diverse collective of youth-led organizations, to help reach youth we might not otherwise hear from. Specifically, we asked the GYC to:

- collect previous reports by youth-led organizations on underlying causes contributing to youth violence
- work with youth to develop an analysis of issues that are at the roots of violence involving youth in our communities, and
- develop recommendations on youth-led strategies for building safe and healthy communities, supporting youth-led initiatives and driving community-based work.

The perspectives of diverse youth on violence and youth issues brought together by the GYC have been particularly valuable in understanding the lived experiences of many young people, and their important insights into solutions as well as problems. The results of the GYC's work are published in Volume 3.

Although the Neighbourhood Insight Sessions we discuss below included Aboriginal youth, we also wanted to make sure that we heard the voice of Aboriginal youth in an Aboriginal-specific context, with a focus on youth between the ages of 17 and 24 living in a variety of urban settings. To that end, we retained the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres (OFIFC) to conduct consultations to obtain opinions and recommendations from Aboriginal youth about violence involving youth. Friendship centres, located throughout the province, are not-for-profit corporations providing culturally appropriate services to Aboriginal people in urban communities.

In June 2008, consultation sessions were held in each of seven northern cities (Kenora, Fort Frances, Thunder Bay, Sault Ste. Marie, Sudbury, Timmins and North Bay). Additionally, a session was held in Toronto on June 12, 2008, involving youth from Toronto, Ottawa, Hamilton, London, Niagara/Fort Erie and Barrie. We attended part of that session, where we heard a report on the northern consultations as well as the views of those involved in the Toronto session. We are grateful to OFIFC for organizing these consultations, inviting the young people who participated, arranging for facilitators and summarizing for us the views and recommendations expressed at each session. The 143 youth from 13 communities who gave of their time to take part provided us with an important viewpoint to take into account. A summary of the results of this consultation may be found in Volume 3 of the report.

It was also important for us to talk with youth who have been incarcerated so that we could better understand their perspectives on violence and the barriers they face as a result of their situations. In early 2008, we visited the Brookside Youth Centre in Cobourg. It is a province-run secure residential facility and secondary school for young men who have come into conflict with the law. At the centre, eight young men from different backgrounds spent a day sharing with us their life experiences and hopes for the future. These young men reminded us that those already impacted by violence can still have hope, insights and wisdom.

Throughout the review, it has been encouraging and inspiring to meet so many youth who are striving to make this a safer and better province. These young people, including the youth workers we talked with, deeply impressed us with their insights and ideas. We were often astounded by their courage, achievements and generosity in helping youth survive extraordinarily difficult circumstances and persevere to realize their potential and improve the quality of life in their communities.

2. Neighbourhood Insight Sessions

With the assistance of consultants, we engaged local youth leaders in eight Ontario neighbourhoods to plan and prepare sessions in which we would hear directly from community members, leaders and youth about the impact of violence on their neighbourhoods and the ways they are working to address this issue at the local level. The neighbourhoods we visited were located in Ottawa (Pinecrest-Queensway), Thunder Bay, Kitchener-Waterloo (Downtown Market), Hamilton (McQueston), northwest Toronto (Jane and Finch, and Jamestown), and southeast and northeast Toronto (Kingston-Galloway and L'Amoreaux).

We chose these particular neighbourhoods because, in the short time available, they would give us a sense of how communities in different parts of the province, with different experiences of violence involving youth, at different stages and using different approaches, are responding to this extremely serious issue. We also looked for areas with youth facilitators who had the necessary credibility, knowledge and networks to plan and organize sessions that would allow us to hear true community voices.

The Neighbourhood Insight Sessions were designed to give community groups time with a paid facilitator to consider the issues our report must address, and to prepare a session in which they could effectively share information, ideas and impressions on youth violence in their neighbourhoods. In particular, we sought to gain a better understanding of:

- The dynamics of youth violence as it is experienced in individual neighbourhoods, and its effects on residents and their community
- Neighbourhoods' perspectives on the broad issues facing the review, particularly structural reforms to address the root causes of violence involving youth in Ontario
- How existing government and community initiatives were perceived on the ground
- Local strategies, programs and coordination mechanisms proposed by the neighbourhoods
- Neighbourhoods' assets and capacity and their needs for supports from existing and proposed initiatives, and
- The potential for ongoing collaborative work at the neighbourhood level, involving residents and representatives from the broader community and its institutions.

In each neighbourhood, the local youth our consultants retained worked for several weeks with community groups and individuals to collect information and perspectives on the impacts and challenges of violence involving youth. They also collected the neighbourhood's perceptions of what is or is not working locally to address the root causes of that violence. When this preparation, with necessarily abbreviated timelines, was complete, we then visited each neighbourhood to meet with the representatives the neighbourhood had selected.

The facilitators who prepared and led the discussion in each neighbourhood, on average, connected with about 50 people to obtain feedback and advice. In total, more than 400 participants who live and/or work in the eight neighbourhoods were involved in the Neighbourhood Insight Sessions, with about half of them taking part in the sessions with us. Youth participants were diverse in their life experiences: some were in school, out of school, single parents, homeless, involved in gangs, employed, unemployed, and/or with experience in the criminal justice system. The adults who participated included parents, teachers, parole officers, police, elected officials, social service staff and volunteers.

These sessions were a rich and deep source of ideas and inspiration for us. We commend to our readers the summary of them published in Volume 3. We are deeply grateful to the participants for the trust they placed in us in giving yet again of their time and knowledge. We very much hope that they will see that trust repaid through the extent to which they have influenced our work and findings.

We also benefited greatly from more informal visits we made to Windsor, Etobicoke and Peel Region, and from numerous informal contacts with individuals from many walks of life throughout the duration of our review. We thank all of those we met for their helpful advice.

3. Research

Violence involving youth is a challenge for many Ontario municipalities and rural areas. It is anything but a Toronto-only issue. To help ensure a provincewide lens on available youth programs and services, we asked ministries most impacted by violence involving youth for an inventory of relevant programs and services they deliver or fund. We were particularly interested in programs and services that do one or more of the following: target youth violence; are directed to youth more generally; attempt to deal with root causes of violence and other negative behaviour at the family level; or are of general application but, in the view of the ministries, help address the roots of youth violence. We further asked ministries, through transfer payment agencies or community groups that operate relevant programs, to identify such programs in the eight neighbourhoods we visited in our Neighbourhood Insight Sessions.

The program inventory exercise was undertaken to determine what programs exist to address violence involving youth and then to assess whether, and if so how, they have been evaluated. We then looked at how program spending overall fits with best practices that high-quality evaluations in Ontario and elsewhere have identified and what, if any, gaps exist in Ontario's programs. Chapter 8 discusses the outcomes of this inventory exercise.

We also asked ministries to provide literature reviews and research papers on a variety of topics, including youth mental health issues; youth engagement strategies through sports, arts and leadership programs; and gun and gang violence. For a complete list of ministry research papers, please see Appendix 2. These papers helped inform our understanding of a variety of issues surrounding youth and violence, particularly from a provincial point of view. We also held individual meetings with provincial deputy ministers in September 2007 and again in the spring and summer of 2008 to get their input as senior officials on the topic of violence and youth issues more generally.

Our research consultant, Prof. Scot Wortley, prepared extensive literature reviews in two areas of interest to us: the Causes of Youth Violence and Community Crime Prevention. We also retained the services of other academics to undertake specific research projects. Their research examined the impact of enforcement approaches on the incidence of violent crime; critical race perspectives on youth violence; a methodology to identify neighbourhoods across Ontario where there are concentrations of disadvantage; and a comparative analysis of youth justice approaches. This work, and our meetings with the authors of the papers, helped inform and broaden our perspective on many key issues.

In addition, we asked the Institute on Governance, a non-profit organization that promotes effective governance, to look at governance and structural issues and to develop a proposal on how Ontario could ensure a comprehensive, focused and coordinated approach to the roots of violence involving youth. The institute, with the assistance of George Thomson, a former deputy minister at both the provincial and federal levels of government, conducted a review of research and reports relating to governance issues in Canada and internationally. They then prepared a very valuable analysis of certain Canadian and international approaches to coordinating policy and operations within and across governments and with communities and the not-for-profit sector.

As we began to assess the academic and other literature on the roots of youth violence and responses to that violence, it quickly became apparent that other jurisdictions had developed significant approaches to these issues. While there were many it would have been useful to visit, time permitted only one.

Having found a significant number of leading initiatives in the United Kingdom, we visited London in April 2008 to discover firsthand whether and how these initiatives might be applied in Ontario. We obtained exceptionally valuable information on areas of particular interest, including addressing social exclusion, crime prevention and poverty reduction through place-based policy and service delivery strategies; the structural governance initiatives necessary for success in these areas; data collection, particularly in the area of race; targeting and monitoring mechanisms; community engagement; and the United Kingdom's wide-ranging anti-racism strategy. Our work with the City of Toronto and the United Way led to their representatives asking to join us on this visit, and we were very pleased to have the perspectives of a major funder and a municipal government at our meetings.

Overall, we not only gained valuable insights and strong examples of approaches we are recommending, but the visit also gave us an important lens through which to view what we have learned from our many Canadian sources.

4. Focused Consultations

Another significant source of information and advice was the focused consultations we carried out from September 2007 through to May 2008. Together with our secretariat, we held meetings with over 200 individuals and organizations. Groups we met with included the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, the African Canadian Legal Clinic, Tropicana Community Services, Toronto Community Housing Corporation, the Youth Challenge Fund, and the Space Coalition, to name only a few. A list of those who met with us is included in Appendix 2.

These individuals and organizations are already doing a great deal to address and prevent violence involving youth. They gave generously of their time to provide valuable advice and ideas that helped shape the approach we are recommending to the Premier. Invariably, we were deeply impressed by their commitment, energy and ideas. Regrettably, we could not meet with everyone we would like to have heard from, due to the time constraints of the review. However, we invited those individuals and organizations to make a written submission to the review. Those who did so are also listed in Appendix 2.

Finally, recognizing their important roles in their communities, we also wrote to all Ontario MPPs and the MPs from Ontario ridings to advise them of our review's work and to invite them to submit their comments. Several MPPs and MPs responded, and we benefited significantly from their insights and advice.

5. Provincewide

To ensure that all Ontarians could be heard on such important matters, we also launched an Internet site: www.rootsofyouthviolence.on.ca. The site includes general information about our mandate, contact information, a discussion guide to help flag some of the key issues for consideration, as well as a survey mechanism for feedback on the review. We received over 5,400 completed surveys via the website. A synopsis of the responses is found in Volume 3. For those who preferred to phone in, we established a toll-free telephone line for comments, although few chose to reach us this way.

Conclusion

We asked for the advice of Ontarians because we believe that our review will lead to sustainable change only if it is built on the shared experiences, insights and wisdom of youth and other Ontarians. We received far more assistance than anyone could have anticipated and hope that we have done justice to it — and to those who so thoughtfully and generously provided it — in our report.

Chapter 3:

The Immediate Risk Factors for Violence Involving Youth

Introduction

As noted in Chapter 1, the Premier asked us to analyze the roots of violence involving youth and to provide advice on the best ways for his government to move forward to address those roots. This required that we come to an understanding of the terms "roots," "youth" and "violence" in the specific context of our assignment. We will discuss violence involving youth in some detail in Chapter 5; here, we outline our approach to the term "roots" — the core of the assignment given to us by the Premier.

As we began to consider the issue of roots, we were struck immediately by the vast amount of academic literature, professional commentary and public discourse in this field. Innumerable research projects, thousands of articles, hundreds of books, scores of schools of thought, many fully developed theories and, around the world, probably almost-weekly conferences all grapple with the sources, causation and prevention of crime. Media coverage and public opinion are abundant and pervasive. Narrowing the topic to crimes of violence involving youth does little to narrow the range of available information, nor the volume of competing ideas and approaches being advanced.

We were also struck by the large number of dedicated individuals, groups and agencies who work on a daily basis to address the conditions that can give rise to crime, along with those who work specifically in the fields of crime prevention, detection or deterrence. Sometimes, they work within the context of approaches that have been substantiated by research; other times they forge new approaches or follow established paths that lack a foundation in research or evaluation. Regardless, their good faith and commitment, and the value of their experience and ideas, are immediately evident to anyone entering this field. Their views, along with the research findings, have informed much of what we say in this analysis.

It is, of course, impossible to reconcile all of the competing views and theories. We have, nonetheless, been able to find common themes underlying competing theories, and common arguments within competing approaches. We have then drawn on these, and our own consultations, experience and judgment, in developing our approach to identifying the roots of violence involving youth. While we expect disagreement from some specialists and from those with long-entrenched positions on the issues, we are confident that our approach is well supported and appropriate for Ontario at this juncture.

Our Approach

In outlining our approach, it is important to emphasize that we were asked to address violence involving youth, not youth crime in general. Based on the trends and impacts identified in Chapter 5, our primary focus within this mandate is on finding the roots of the kind of violence that causes serious injuries or death or the fear of such. While we will, of course, address other forms of violence, including bullying, we believe that the very serious violence is different from other crime. It involves far fewer youth, yet raises far deeper concerns. This is the case whether the concerns are about the specific youth involved in this violence, its impacts on communities or what it portends for our society as a whole.

This difference and these concerns arise from the state of mind that puts a young person on the path to serious violence. Many youth will commit an offence of some kind as they grow up, including quite a few who will get into fights and commit minor assaults. However, very few commit the kind of serious violence about which we are most concerned. It is the factors that put some youth on the path towards this kind of violence that we must identify and understand if we are to fulfil our mandate.

To understand why we need to focus on those factors, we need to look beyond the relatively small number of youth who are involved in serious violence. We must also be very concerned about the larger number of youth in our schools and on our streets with a state of mind, a view of the world around them, and often a weapon, which put them at immediate risk of involvement in serious violence.

It takes a certain desperation for a young person to walk our streets with a gun. The sense of nothing to lose and no way out that roils within such youth creates an ever-present danger. That danger arises from the impulsiveness of youth and the lack of foresight with which they often act. The unfortunate — and often tragic — reality is that it will often take very little by way of provocation or incentive to trigger that latent violence once we have let the immediate risk factors develop. This most often puts other youth in danger's way, but can do the same for any of us, because it creates a reality in which violence is unpredictable — unpredictable in location, unpredictable in cause and unpredictable in consequences.

This is what lies at the heart of what often seems like inexplicable violence and of the devastating community impacts we have set out in Chapter 5. It is why we need to be deeply concerned about the present state of affairs in Ontario. It is why we must identify the immediate risk factors for violence that exist within some youth, and then identify and address the conditions that give rise to them.

What then are the immediate risk factors — the ones that create that state of desperation and put a youth in the immediate path of violence? While no set of factors can explain all violence, we are persuaded that youth are most likely to be at immediate risk of involvement in serious violence if they:

- Have a deep sense of alienation and low self-esteem
- Have little empathy for others and suffer from impulsivity
- Believe that they are oppressed, held down, unfairly treated and neither belong to nor have a stake in the broader society
- Believe that they have no way to be heard through other channels
- Have no sense of hope.

Our experience and our work on this review make it clear to us that most youth who feel connected to and engaged with the broader society, and who feel valued and safe and see a positive future for themselves in it, will not experience these conditions and will not commit serious violence. Indeed, many of the youth who meet the above descriptors will also not do so, because no triggering event or circumstance will occur to unleash their feelings or because society manages to intervene in time. But when such a trigger does manifest itself before that intervention, as it all too often does, it is they who are far more likely to explode in a very harmful way.

We believe that starting from this understanding is important because it permits us to move from identifying the immediate risk factors for involvement in serious violence to analyzing the conditions in which they arise. And once we identify these conditions — the roots — strategies to address them can be put in place.

We note in this connection that many specialists use much longer lists of risk factors, which do not necessarily focus on identifying youth who are at immediate risk of involvement in serious violence. Our focus on that objective arises from our concern about the dangerous mindset we have described above, and its connection to the core of our mandate from the Premier. We fully agree that other risk factors are useful in identifying "at-risk" youth in general and in identifying intervention opportunities, strategies and programming.

To pick a particularly prominent one, we agree with those who point to associations with deviant peers as an important predictor, and often inciter, of violence involving youth. Indeed, many of the roots that trouble us are problematic precisely because they increase a youth's association with those who are already deviant. But those associations are not roots; the roots are what often produced the deviant peers and made a particular youth susceptible to them.

For us, it is the roots — the conditions in which the immediate risk factors can grow and flourish — that require the urgent attention of the Premier and his government. Our report will accordingly focus on those matters. We will also provide advice on intervention strategies for youth who do have the immediate risk factors, but we firmly believe that intervention strategies alone cannot possibly address the issues we face in Ontario today.

If we have learned anything as a society in recent years, it is that we do not have the ability to identify all of these youth in time to try to apply preventive measures when they are nearing or have reached this dangerous state. Nor is it clear that we have the resources to provide the extremely intensive approaches that are necessary to try to address their condition, or that there is enough expertise to ensure that even timely and well-resourced interventions will always work. And even if we could intervene successfully, it is clear that if we do not address the roots, they will continue to supply a stream of replacements for those youth we do help overcome their condition.

The costs of failing to identify and address the roots are accordingly ongoing, tragic and high. These include the immeasurable cost of lost lives and serious injuries that result from violence involving youth, the cost of community fragmentation and immobilization, the cost of policing and the justice system and other interventions, and the cost to the broader social fabric of the province.

In our next chapter, we outline the most prevalent and pernicious of those roots, setting the stage for the approach we are proposing to the Premier. Before doing so, we provide a very brief synopsis of the academic literature on which we drew for this part of our report.

The Literature

To assist us in this part of our inquiry, we commissioned a review of the major theoretical perspectives on the root causes of crime. Included in Volume 5, this review offers a synthesis of, and commentary on, numerous published studies in this field. We commend it to those seeking a more detailed appreciation of the relevant theoretical work; for the purposes of this chapter, it will suffice to identify the best-known theories and a few of their key elements.

In the most general of terms, criminologists and other academics interested in crime tend to either start with a theory about a given condition (e.g., poor nutrition, a certain brain chemistry or certain family or social conditions), and then test whether it is a predictor of youth violence, or start with known offenders and seek to identify common characteristics in their backgrounds. Through this work, predictors and correlates can be, and have been, found in many domains, and have been collected into at least 14 distinct theoretical approaches or doctrines, many of which have their own sub-doctrines.

What struck us in our review of these doctrines was that many of them found that the studied condition or predictor often led to one of the immediate risk factors we have identified. And, at the same time, many of the conditions studied or identified are implicitly and often explicitly traced in the literature to the conditions we examine in our next chapter.

In the result, without claiming to have reconciled these deeply held theoretical constructs, nor indeed even to have attempted to do so, we take comfort from the fact that within most of them lie strong themes that support our emphasis on the immediate risk factors we have identified, and/or that trace the conditions their authors are concerned about to many of the same roots we believe the Premier must address.

We provide below a thumbnail sketch of these doctrines to illustrate the range of thinking in the academic world on these issues.

1. **Biosocial theory:** This theory considers that certain biological anomalies or physical disabilities may make some individuals more prone to violence. These can stem from nutritional deficiencies, hormonal influences, allergies or exposure to environmental contaminants, or may arise from neurophysical conditions, such as fetal alcohol syndrome, brain dysfunction, injury or chemistry, genetics or evolution. According to many of these sub-theories, the studied condition leads to difficulties in controlling violent impulses when under stress and has its origins in circumstances often associated with poverty or dysfunctional families.

2. **Psychological theories:** These theories look at how mental processes impact on propensities for violence. They look at the connections among learning, intelligence, personality and aggressive behaviour. In general, these theories often look to early negative family circumstances as sources of damaged egos or to the way certain negative behaviours are learned in families where aggression is common. They consider the impact of mental illness, although many note that conditions such as parental neglect, child abuse, victimization, racism and poverty are associated with violence as well as being a cause of mental illness.

3. **Rational choice theory:** This theory holds that people freely choose their behaviour and are motivated by the avoidance of pain and the pursuit of pleasure. This perspective assumes that crime is a personal choice, the result of individual decision-making processes. It posits that offenders weigh the potential benefits and consequences of committing an offence and then make a rational choice on the basis of this evaluation. The central premise of this theory is that people are rational beings, whose behaviour can be controlled or modified by a fear of punishment.

   However, to the extent the research supports the rational nature of crime, it is confined primarily to instrumental crime, such as property and drug offences. There is some support in relation to violence, where youth use violence to protect themselves in situations when they feel they lack power.

   The assumption behind this theory, that offenders conduct a cost-benefit analysis before deciding to engage in crime, is not strongly supported by research. While some thought goes into offending, the planning tends to focus on the immediate events (e.g., the choice of which house to enter), not the long-term consequences of their actions (e.g., whether to commit a crime at all). Youth in particular do not routinely consider the long term; they tend to be impulsive and focus on the immediacy of the rewards associated with offending. Even if youth do consider the criminal justice consequences, most find them irrelevant as they believe it is unlikely they will be apprehended.

4. **Social disorganization theory:** This theory postulates that crime is a function of neighbourhood dynamics and not necessarily a function of individuals within high-crime neighbourhoods. The core factor seems to be high population turnover, resulting from the undesirable status of certain

communities. A number of studies have also supported the idea that economic deprivation may be an important influence on social disorganization. They propose that economic deprivation could lead to social disorganization, which in turn can lead to violence and crime.

More recent analyses have argued that social disorganization can reduce social capital and collective efficacy, thereby increasing crime and violence rates. Social capital fosters trust and solidarity among residents, while collective efficacy relates to the belief that residents can effectively control the likelihood of undesirable behaviour within the neighbourhood.

The overall theory is that in socially disorganized neighbourhoods, conventional institutions of social control, such as families, schools, churches and organizations, are weak and unable to regulate the behaviour of the neighbourhood's residents. In essence, a neighbourhood characterized by social disorganization provides fertile soil for crime and delinquency in two ways: a lack of behavioural control mechanisms and the cultural transmission of delinquent values.

5. **Economic deprivation:** There are several elements to this theory. One is that capitalism encourages the criminality of the poor by the misery and the inequality that it foists on them. Another is that inequality can reduce self-esteem and foster the development of a negative self-image, which in turn can lead to crime. Still another is that involvement in illicit activities not only provides short-term capital gains for those without other capital, but also bolsters self-image and feelings of social competence.

   Relative economic deprivation is another way to consider motivators of crime. Relative deprivation theories focus on the recognition of an individual's well-being relative to others. This version brings a subjective assessment into the analysis. The recognition of relative deprivation can result in feelings of despair, frustration, grievance, injustice, low self-worth and anger and may be a powerful motivator of crime.

   Thus, economic deprivation is said to lead to violence as a means to relieve poverty or acquire goods that youth otherwise lack. It may also lead to violence by creating feelings of hopelessness and anger, which may lead to diffuse aggression. The potential for violence may be higher where economic deprivation is believed to be unjust, for example, where it is believed that one is economically deprived because of factors such as race.

6. **Strain theories:** There are several versions of this theory, each arguing that strain creates pressures and incentives to engage in criminal coping as a response to the strain experienced. One version is that the disjunction between culturally ascribed goals, such as economic success, and the availability of legitimate means to attain such goals puts pressure on the cultural norms that dictate what means should be used to achieve the culturally prescribed goal. This takes place in societies that place an intense value on economic success.

   Another version links the pressures to secure monetary rewards with weak controls from noneconomic social institutions as a way of promoting criminal activity. This arises where the social institutions are subservient to the economic structure and therefore fail to provide alternative definitions of self-worth and achievement.

   Yet another approach looks more generally to any strain that is seen as unjust, is high in magnitude, associated with low social control and creates some incentive to engage in criminal coping. In this version, individuals experiencing strain may develop negative emotions, including anger, from the impact of adversity; resentment from unjust treatment by others; and depression or anxiety from blaming themselves for the stressful consequence. A last variant of this theory focuses on relative deprivation, outlined above.

   Overall, it is thought that strain can result from the desire for money, thrills or status; parental rejection; harsh, erratic or excessive discipline; child neglect; abuse; negative secondary school experiences; homelessness; abusive peers; criminal victimization; and experiences with prejudice and discrimination relating to characteristics such as race.

7. **Social learning theory:** According to this theory, deviant and criminal conduct is learned and sustained through associations with family and peer networks. The theory revolves around differential association with people who commit criminal behaviour and espouse definitions favourable to it. Direct association or interaction with people who engage in certain kinds of behaviour can lead to similar behaviour as individuals engage in behaviour that they have previously witnessed in others. Related to this are the ways in which behaviours are reinforced by peer contacts. The research literature has consistently found that there is a strong relationship between childhood experiences of violence in the family and early childhood aggression and a more moderate relationship between these experiences and adolescent aggression. By contrast, peer influences appear to be more important in adolescence.

8. **The subculture of violence:** This theory involves the role of social control processes in perpetuating subcultural violence. It suggests that criminal behaviour can be predicted by group norms that lead to instrumental use of violence for impression management and maintaining reputation. One element of this is the culture of honour, which some studies trace to socioeconomic marginalization and the resulting embracing of the code of the streets. This theory is part of a body of research that highlights various social processes ranging from how crime is learned and taught to how it emerges from social inequalities.

9. **Social learning, the media and violence:** Some theories suggest that media violence leads to social learning of violent behaviour, while others suggest that entertainment is typically used to manage emotions and that those who are already aggressive actively seek out violent media content. The findings to date do not provide clear and consistent evidence that media violence causes aggressive and violent behaviour.

10. **Perceptions of injustice, crime and violence:** This theory explores the possibility that perceptions of injustice may help explain race and class differences in criminal behaviour, including violence. It notes the widespread perceptions of bias in the justice system and argues that it leads to mistrust in criminal justice professionals. The perceived existence of unfair sanctions, combined with the absence of sanctions for race-based harms, reduces faith in the justice system, which in turn sets the stage for offending.

    This can play out through justifications for deviance that are seen as valid by the delinquent, but not by the legal system or society at large. If offenders believe that the system is unjust and that their chances of success are blocked by external forces such as racism or class interests, they may be less likely to trust officials and more likely to lose faith in the system and resort to crime. The perceived injustice essentially becomes a rationalization or justification for criminal behaviour.

    Another manifestation of this is when members of disadvantaged communities feel marginalized by the police and stop cooperating with them. They then rely on informal methods to address conflicts, which may lead to increases in violence. There is also a theory of defiance to explain the conditions under which punishment increases crime, based on legitimacy, social bond, shame and pride in the emotional response to sanctioning experiences. In short, when offenders experience sanctioning conduct as illegitimate, future defiance is provoked.

This theory can be extended outside the criminal justice system to include how people feel they are treated by other systems. People who attribute their unemployment and poverty to outside forces can be more likely to engage in criminal activity than those who blame themselves. They do not perceive equal opportunity and can therefore become more involved in crime. These conditions and perceptions of inequality can lead youths to strike out violently in a display of resentment, bitterness and frustration. This is very similar to the strain theory, as perceptions of injustice can be viewed as stressors that can lead to delinquency as a coping mechanism.

11. **Social control theory:** This theory assumes a relationship between delinquency and lower levels of social control. The overall idea is that crime occurs when social bonds are weakened or are not well-established. These bonds are based on an attachment to those both within and outside of the family; commitment to activities in which one has invested time and energy, such as educational or career goals; and involvement with activities that serve to further bond the individual to others and leave limited time for deviant activities. A key element of this theory is an attachment to parents, schools and others, with those who feel a stronger connection to their parents or schools being less likely to commit violent offences.

12. **Self-control theory:** Self-control theory holds that people engage in crime because they lack self-control, require immediate gratification, cannot see the long-term consequences of their actions and have little empathy for others. In these ways, it is very similar to psychological theories of impulsivity. What is particular to self-control theory is that it holds that self-control must be established in early childhood. If a person does not have self-control by three or four years of age, this theory argues, they never will. It essentially assumes that offenders cannot change and therefore should be incapacitated to avoid future criminality.

13. **Integrated life course theories:** This approach recognizes that crime is a complex multidimensional phenomenon with multiple causes. It integrates a variety of ecological, socialization, psychological, biological and economic factors into a coherent structure to explain the eventual behaviour of individuals. A constellation of factors in an individual's life must be considered in order to understand his or her behaviour.

    One aspect of this theory looks at how children are socialized through their perceived opportunity for involvement in activities with others, their degree of such involvement, the skills they have to participate and the reinforcement they perceive from their involvement and interactions. When this is consistent, a social bond of attachment and commitment develops between the individual and the socializing unit. This then inhibits behaviour inconsistent with the behaviour practised by the socializing unit.

    A second theory specifies a causal pathway, in which strain leads to the weakening of social bonds with conventional others and institutions, leading to greater association with deviant peers and the subsequent learning of anti-social and delinquent values. Adolescents who live in socially disorganized neighbourhoods or who are improperly socialized have an increased risk of experiencing strain. The perceptions of strain can lead to the weakening of bonds with conventional groups, activities and norms. This can lead to the rejection of conventional values and encourage youth to seek out deviant peer groups. Such deviant associations then create the environment for anti-social learning and reinforcement of anti-social values and behaviour.

14. **Critical perspectives on violence:** These theories either attempt to construct broader working definitions of violence or to draw linkages between various forms of official or legitimate violence and acts of violence at the interpersonal level. They are united in that they all emphasize the primacy of class relations when discussing the issue of crime and justice. They also tend to share a number of general assumptions, including that crime and the criminal law are shaped by the structure of the political economy, with particular emphasis on the importance of class, ethnicity, race and gender; and that the predominantly repressive approach of the state is generally ineffective as a response to the crime problem and perpetuates various forms of discrimination and inequitable justice.

    In particular, theorists with this specialty are concerned with the manner in which structural forces, cultural ideologies and social processes create, sustain and exacerbate social problems. These forces include militarism, racism, sexism, poverty, state and corporate violence, criminal injustice and war. This is in contrast to most of the theories dominating the social sciences literature, which have tried to explain crime by focusing on the abnormality of individuals, communities or cultures.

Critical scholars have also begun to inject broader definitions of violence into the public discourse in an effort to move us beyond analyses where illegitimate force requires both a visible agent and an unwilling recipient. These formulations of what should be considered a crime or an act of violence have sought to encapsulate all forms of oppression and harm, including violence committed by corporate and government agents/agencies that is typically ignored. They argue that violence should include actions that inflict humiliation, stigmatization, material loss or social isolation, thus providing a space for devastating social forces like racism and social inequality to be viewed as forms of structural violence. Many have further argued that the law symbolizes an official and legitimate form of violence that is often used to create or reproduce racial and other social inequalities.

Conclusion

Bolstered by our reading of the literature we have synopsized above, and grounded in our consultations and experience, we believe that the search for the roots of violence involving youth must begin by identifying the immediate risk factors for such violence. With that as an organizing construct, we can then identify and address the conditions that can give rise to those factors. These can properly be seen as the roots of violence involving youth. If we understand these roots, we will then know what we have to try to address in order to prevent serious violence.

As we will set out in Chapter 9, a focus on addressing these roots will not only reduce the pool of youth who are on the verge of violence, but will also strengthen our youth, our families, our communities and our economy in ways that are not only highly beneficial in themselves, but that will positively reinforce each other to maximize the effectiveness of our work to address serious violence involving youth.

Accordingly, we will move in our next chapter to look at 10 areas that have been shown to lead to alienation, low self-esteem, a sense of oppression or victimization, a lack of voice or a lack of hope. It is our advice to the Premier that only by addressing those areas — the roots — in a coordinated, targeted, measured and monitored way will Ontario become an inclusive and therefore safe society.

Chapter 4:

The Roots of the Immediate Risk Factors

Introduction

Having identified in the first part of Chapter 3 the immediate risk factors for violence involving youth, in this chapter we outline the major conditions in which those factors grow and flourish within our society. Some of these conditions — which we consider to be the roots of this violence — have been identified by the criminological theories that we summarized in the second part of Chapter 3; others arise from our consideration of the broader social science literature or from previous governmental and community reports; while still others arise from the experiences of those with whom we met.

We will not attempt in this chapter to outline every aspect of the roots we have identified. We were asked to avoid reinventing the wheel, and it would serve no purpose for us to restate here the large volume of research findings and reports detailing the existence and nature of the roots we discuss in this chapter. Instead, we will review how each of the many well-documented roots can lead to alienation, a lack of hope, no sense of belonging, a sense of deep injustice, or to a combination of any of these and the other immediate risk factors. Our focus in this chapter is on the effects, rather than the existence, of these roots.

While we will discuss each root separately for ease of exposition, it will be immediately obvious that many, if not all, of them frequently interconnect and intertwine in ways that create devastating cumulative impacts for far too many of our youth. In our view, it is only by recognizing not just the roots, but also their interconnections, that we can identify and design the long-range comprehensive strategies necessary to address them and the serious violence that confronts us as a society.

We note in this context that our report does not have the benefit of the kinds of statistical analyses often available when similar issues are looked at in other jurisdictions. Ontario has limited data, particularly on the many issues where racism intersects with other roots. We will discuss the need for this and other statistical information in Chapters 9 and 10. In its absence, we have necessarily relied on the advice we received, the robust and persuasive data available on similar matters elsewhere, and the experience and lived reality of those working in the relevant fields.

We do not accept that those who have refused to collect data can resist change because there are no data. When the available evidence supports the need for change, that change must be undertaken. In our particular context, we note that if our advice about the critical importance of data, monitoring and evaluation is followed, information will be available in time for any required mid-course corrections along the path we propose for Ontario. We are confident from all we have seen and heard during our review that the data will support taking that path and, indeed, will most likely accentuate the urgency of so doing.

The purpose of this chapter then is to give the reader a good working understanding of how a large number of circumstances, especially in combination, can produce the immediate risk factors for violence involving youth. The core message will be the breadth and intensity of the response needed to come to grips with this issue.

The Roots

1. Poverty as a Root of the Immediate Risk Factors

Poverty does not directly cause violent crime. If it did, then given the extent and depth of the poverty among us, our levels of violence would be truly frightening. The reality is that most people living in poverty are working hard to hold down one or more uncertain, low-wage jobs, to improve their skills or education, to hold together families and communities against a bombardment of negative circumstances, or sometimes are doing all three. Their hard work and their strong commitment to a society that fails them in so many ways are to be admired.

But poverty without hope, poverty with isolation, poverty with hunger and poor living conditions, poverty with racism and poverty with numerous daily reminders of social exclusion, can lead to the immediate risk factors for violence identified in Chapter 3. We say *can lead to* because numerous protective factors or counterweights operate to block these risk factors arising for many, even in the worst of conditions, or act to mitigate and contain them where they are created. But, at present, there is both too much poverty and too little by way of counterweights to prevent poverty being a central issue for anyone concerned about the extent of violence involving youth in this province.

In our view, poverty can lead to alienation, a lack of self-esteem, the experience of oppression, a lack of hope or empathy or sense of belonging and other immediate risk factors through three different but linked pathways:

- The **level** of poverty: the depth of relative deprivation experienced by those in poverty

- The **concentration** of poverty in definable geographic areas where negative impacts grow and reinforce each other, and strain when they do not eliminate the capacity of families and communities to provide positive counterweights

- The **circumstances** of poverty, in which services and facilities that most of us take for granted are not locally available or are denied by reason of cost or accessibility, or both, to those who need them the most, eliminating from the lives of far too many the positive factors that can impede the growth of the roots of violence involving youth.

The Level of Poverty

In relation to the first of these pathways, we heard through the Neighbourhood Insight Sessions and other consultations about the reality of the hunger that pervades our society. We heard as well about parents whose struggle to hold down two or three jobs leaves them with no time or energy to parent, of youth being humiliated by the obviousness of their poverty, of the impact of precarious and substandard housing on their ability to study and learn and engage with friends, and about the numerous other daily stresses of living on the margins of a prosperous society. And we heard about the enormous pressure our society puts on youth to have material possessions or to at least see themselves as being able to obtain them through work that is reasonably within their expectations. As we will discuss in Section 7 of this chapter, this culture of consumption is pervasive, fed by advertising campaigns and intense media coverage of affluent lifestyles, and feeds the alienation of youth.

For all of these reasons, and more that anti-poverty activists could cite, we have no difficulty concluding that the state of being excluded from the minimum conditions of living that are seen as normal in Ontario can lead youth to feel alienated and marginalized, to see themselves as victims of an unfair and uncaring society and to believe that they have no real stake or future in that society. We will see in the next section how racism produces similar effects. Given the staggering extent to which poverty is racialized in Ontario, as discussed in the next section, these two factors often combine to create a situation that should deeply trouble all Ontarians.

Whether or not combined with racism, but especially when they are, the impacts of the level of poverty are made worse by concentrations of poverty and the circumstances that accompany poverty. These factors not only can themselves lead to the immediate risk factors for violence involving youth and magnify other conditions leading to those factors, but can also seriously erode the capacity of families and communities to provide timely and effective counterweights. Because they are so central to the roots of violence involving youth, we devote most of this section to these aspects of poverty.

Concentrations of Poverty

By concentrations of poverty, we mean the unacceptable way in which the poor are effectively being forced to live in functionally segregated parts of our cities. In Toronto, this phenomenon has been powerfully documented by United Way Toronto (*Poverty by Postal Code)*, by Prof. David Hulchanski of the University of Toronto and by the city itself (see United Way Toronto and The Canadian Council on Social Development, 2004; Hulchanski, March 8, 2007). National statistics used to measure relative deprivation for over 30 years have shown this to be the reality across England. And, in most of Ontario, those familiar with their communities can identify the same reality even without the benefit of statistics.

A perfect storm of factors has contributed to this over time: the erosion of the middle class, rapidly escalating property values and rents, the severe reduction in affordable and decent housing anywhere and in rental accommodation in the relatively more affluent parts of our cities, the mistakes of earlier times when subsidized housing was concentrated in large isolated developments, the withdrawal of governments from the provision of social housing for a long period of time, and the failure of governments to foster economically integrated communities through the tools that have been available to them. As the External Advisory Committee on Cities and Communities concluded in its 2006 report to the Prime Minister:

> Places can also reinforce the penalties of poverty. The places of the poor are often located in less green, less clean and more mean streets and failing communities (External Advisory Committee on Cities and Communities, 2006: viii).

There is almost universal agreement that these economic ghettos have very negative impacts. Toronto's Police Chief, Bill Blair, asked us to imagine the impact of living in a community where if you get a job, you have to leave. From our perspective, we do not deny — indeed we respect and value — the fact that many living in these communities build strong networks and relationships and take pride in where they live. But we see that as a strength to build on and protect as economic integration is pursued, rather than as a reason to not recognize the pernicious impacts of that isolation for all too many.

Those pernicious impacts are pervasive. They start with the basic fact that Chief Blair noted: people who get jobs that are stable and even relatively well-paying will often move out. This may be because they were living in assisted housing for which they no longer qualify, or because they want to and can get away from a neighbourhood that is unpleasant and often dangerous to live in, or just because they want better schools for their children or shorter commute times for themselves. Whatever the reason, the impact is the same: the community loses a strong member, and youth have fewer positive role models to emulate and less contact with people who might provide leads or opportunities, or advice around options and how to pursue them.

As well, the fact that a community is constantly in flux, as many residents see it as a place from which to escape as soon as possible, deprives the community of the cohesion and continuity that make for a strong neighbourhood. This reality, plus the relative paucity of people with the time, energy and knowledge to lobby hard and effectively for improvements to the community, puts these neighbourhoods at a serious disadvantage in comparison with cohesive communities, whose members can lobby for improvements and services. Without the benefit of "the sharp elbows of the middle class" lobbying from within their communities, they not only fail to be heard, but as well become increasingly disadvantaged as communities with those sharp elbows obtain a larger slice of a finite pie.

But the effects go beyond these. Businesses avoid neighbourhoods where poverty is concentrated, with the perverse result that the poorest among us have the worst access to decent shops with decent prices. Residents then face expensive and time-consuming travel to get even basic groceries and supplies at a reasonable price, with the result that poor nutrition is all too often the fate of many children. Similar issues lead to less access to important services, such as full-service banks or doctors. At the same time, this lack of businesses means there are fewer local jobs, whether full or part time, than in other communities.

Similarly, professionals tend not to locate their services in or near these communities, creating the same time and financial barriers to these services being accessed by neighbourhood residents and, at the same time, removing potential role models from the immediate environs. And even where professionals such as teachers do provide services within the community, they rarely live there or even nearby because of the concentration of poverty and all that goes with it. This not only has the impact of depriving the community of role models, potential leaders and strong voices, but also means that the youth who most need a teacher or other professional who understands their day-to-day realities are the least likely to have that benefit.

Those public services such as education or health care that do locate within these neighbourhoods are often under-resourced for the enormous needs of the local residents. This can lead to substandard services, especially when combined with the fact that some of the best and most senior service providers opt to work in less stressful environments, or burn out and leave. Whether through high turnover or sometimes the lesser skills or experience of their staff, the public services offered to the most needy can be of a lower quality than is required to address the local needs and circumstances.

As well, we were told on many occasions that just having an address or postal code known to be in an area of concentrated poverty can lead to individuals not being called for interviews when they apply for work. This stigmatization by postal code runs through a raft of other circumstances, from policing to education, and for all too many becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. For many more, just knowing of the potential to be held back or undervalued simply because of their address is enough to weaken their self-esteem and reduce their sense of opportunity and hope.

As if all of this were not bad enough, the combination of negative circumstances where poverty is concentrated and the resulting lack of a strong social structure can often encourage crime. The circumstances and pressures of life in these communities can mean that many residents are isolated and keep to themselves. This withdrawal from public life and public spaces can then create a neighbourhood in which criminals feel more free to operate. If police-community relations are also such that crime or suspicious activity is not often reported, or not effectively acted on when reported, this is accelerated, and the "safety zone" for criminal activity is further expanded.

As crime grows in this environment, it makes the area more unsafe. This reality and the perceptions flowing from it magnify the social isolation that facilitates more crime and even greater fears of going out. When this happens, then as we discuss in Chapter 5 parents won't send their children to after-school or evening programs, and the youth themselves face enormous pressures to join or support gangs for their own safety. Crime and violence are normalized for them, and indeed gang members often provide the strongest role models available. Parents are reluctant to get involved in community associations, and the potential to build the kind of solidarity that could tackle the crime problem is reduced to almost nothing.

Nor is the matter necessarily made better by the extra police these activities sometimes bring to the neighbourhood. Many youth also told us that they felt uncomfortable walking through policed areas within their neighbourhoods for fear of being harassed. One senior civic official highlighted this for us when he explained that in one community the youth favoured the use of surveillance cameras in public areas because they created zones where the police did not harass the youth. Supporting this perception, many parents told us that they discouraged their children from going out because of what it might lead to, with obvious consequences for the mobility of youth and their quality of life.

Whether the resulting isolation is attributed to crime and gangs or to concerns about the police, it makes conditions in the neighbourhood worse. It further stigmatizes the neighbourhood and increases its disadvantage, thereby feeding the impacts we note above and in Chapter 5.

While we have only sketched the most obvious consequences of concentrated areas of poverty, it does not take a lot of imagination to appreciate the multiple, mutually reinforcing ways in which they create alienation and low self-esteem, destroy hope, and demonstrate unfairness and a lack of opportunity. To speak only in terms of our immediate mandate, the fact that poverty is concentrated in certain areas of our cities makes the experience of poverty worse, and worse in ways that can create the immediate risk factors for violence involving youth.

Circumstances Attaching to Poverty

This brings us to our third concern about poverty: the circumstances that accompany it. This set of issues is often closely linked to the impacts that arise from concentrations of poverty, but merits separate attention because, as we see in Chapter 9, the responses to it are different, and because the circumstances often apply to people who are poor regardless of where they live.

In relation to those who live in concentrations of poverty, we have already noted the issues around the lack of nearby businesses. Sadly, the same lack is often apparent in relation to public services. Indeed, as we see in Chapter 7, the City of Toronto's first indicator for a deprived neighbourhood was a relative lack of accessible services, such as parks or recreation, community health centres, libraries or youth services. We discuss this in more detail in Section 3 of this chapter, and outline there just how isolating and alienating a lack of anywhere to go or anything to do can be for young people.

For those who are poor but live in more economically integrated neighbourhoods, the same deprivation can result when they cannot afford the fees for services that are relatively proximate, face language or cultural barriers or lack the time or money to get their children to these services or the resources to access child care or other supports to deal with one child while another is taken to an appointment or activity. The effect on youth is the same: fewer opportunities to play and learn and engage in positive ways with the world around them, more isolation and a lowered sense of opportunity or belonging.

When, as is so often the case, poverty is combined with issues of language or culture or race or confidence in dealing with authority, the problems can be magnified. Even accessible and free programs may not be used by the most disadvantaged if these additional barriers exist. Without aggressive targeting and outreach, and active measures to design and operate programs so that they are relevant and accessible to the most disadvantaged, these services will fail to reach those who need them the most.

Moreover, whether in concentrated areas or not, people who are poor tend to suffer equally from the lack of affordable housing and the impacts of substandard housing. With rent levels where they are, the kind of private sector accommodation available at the bottom of the market is often substandard. And, for reasons we will discuss elsewhere, in at least some parts of the province, including Toronto, a major maintenance deficit means that conditions within public housing are often just as bad, if not worse.

This has enormous impacts on youth. Not only do they lack suitable space to do their homework or read or play with friends, but they are also given daily reminders of their low status in society and how they are perceived by it.

There is no doubt that the quality of their housing imprints itself on the minds of youth. Comments on this reality were among the most forceful and eloquent we heard from youth. They made it very clear to us that they are sophisticated readers and interpreters of their environment, and take to the core of their being the powerful messages of marginalization and exclusion that these living conditions convey. Challenging as it is to live with insufficient resources in this society, it is many times worse to live in accommodation that constantly confronts you with evidence that you are undervalued now and that you are widely perceived as having no valued future role in society. As we discuss in Section 3, similar impacts arise in relation to the physical conditions of some of these neighbourhoods themselves; the combination is obviously doubly disadvantaging.

And it is not just a question of messages. The practical effects are also deeply troubling. Where there is no place to do homework, school achievement suffers and both self-esteem and hope decrease. Where conditions are so cramped that family stress ensues, youth suffer. And when those conditions mean that outdoors is the only place to play, chances for unsupervised interactions with youth who are not on the right path, or confidence-reducing encounters with the police, multiply. The potential for alienation, impulsivity and low self-esteem is powerfully driven by these housing conditions as well as by the messages they convey. Overall, the effects of substandard housing are immediate, happen every day and will continue to happen until we put these units into a decent state of repair.

A further important consequence of poverty lies in the domain of transportation. This affects access to work and services, the amount of time and energy working parents in these neighbourhoods have to engage with their children and their communities, the sense of isolation experienced by youth and their limited exposure to the resources and perspectives of the broader community. We will discuss these and other impacts of poor access to transportation in more detail in the Section 3 of this chapter, but note them here because of the way they are associated with poverty and of the ways they make poverty worse.

The last circumstances of poverty that we address here are the barriers that Ontario's own laws and regulations place in the way of those seeking to advance while receiving social benefits. This complex and troubling area was very recently ably documented by John Stapleton in a report for the Metcalf Foundation entitled *Why Is It so Tough to Get Ahead?* (Stapleton, 2007). We note here for illustrative purposes just a few of the very serious issues he raises about the circumstances faced by many Ontario families, focusing on those that can all too easily erode hope and impede opportunity for youth.

Ontario families that have to rely, fully or partially, on income maintenance programs, such as Ontario Works, the Ontario Disability Support Program, Workers' Compensation, Employment Insurance or the Canada Pension Plan (Disability), and who may also rely on other social supports, such as subsidies for housing and child care, face a bewildering array of rules and standards. Each of these programs has its own rules, which operate in isolation yet often combine to create barriers to employment and higher education. The result, as Mr. Stapleton points out, is that our most disadvantaged families are penalized, and their lives are made more precarious, if they try to become self-sufficient or their children take advantage of scholarships or employment-related programs.

The penalties on these families start when some ordinary and (seemingly) good things happen. For example, if either parent finds employment, then, depending on the social programs involved, reductions in the family's support can add up to more than 100 per cent of every dollar earned by the employed parent (Stapleton, 2007: 29).

Then there are the artificial constraints on the decisions that arise at normal developmental stages for the youth themselves. To quote Mr. Stapleton's analysis:

> In our wider society, children often stay in the family household long past the age of 18. They do so while they pursue further education and training, for example, or while they get their first full-time work experience, or pay off student loans, or save to move out....
>
> When children in families receiving social assistance reach 18, they are no longer considered children. They often stop receiving social assistance as part of the

> family. They can only apply for assistance in their own right if they are no longer dependent on the family. In most instances, that means they must move out of the family home.
>
> Public housing provides housing to families based on a similar definition of adulthood. The public housing landlord may evict a family if the size and activity of the rental unit does not confirm to the 'benefit unit' (the family). In other words, once a child turns 18 and the child moves out, the rental unit can be deemed too large. This can result in an eviction notice for the whole family.
>
> Student loans and grants through Ontario Student Assistance Program and Millennium scholarships can also reduce social assistance payments and have an impact on rental charges.... The approach of an 18th birthday, and even the prospect of an honour such as a scholarship, can be the cause of high stress in a poor family.
>
> [O]ur social policies for welfare recipients force independence on 18-year-olds, discourage them from further schooling, and threaten to take away their shelter.
>
> It is reasonable to assert that these misdirected social policies serve to perpetuate poverty and welfare dependence in the next generation.

Overall, when we look at the way opportunities are limited for the disadvantaged, and many services are effectively denied to them, we see a society that seems all too ready to accept that poverty should mean precarious housing, fewer and poorer parks, recreation facilities, arts opportunities, stores, public services or transportation options. Many in society seem to accept that higher education is not for the disadvantaged, and that attempts to better oneself should be discouraged. The impact of this approach on alienation and a lack of any real sense of opportunity or belonging is palpable across this province and plays a significant role in incubating the immediate risk factors for violence involving youth.

Conclusion

And so we conclude this section as we began: with profound respect for the countless Ontarians who work so hard to overcome the effects of poverty and poverty itself, and profound distress that we as a society have failed to appreciate how hard we are making it for them. We draw hope from the Premier's establishment of a Cabinet committee to address poverty. But we also note that for far too many, the level, the concentrations and the circumstances of poverty in Ontario have created almost insurmountable obstacles to any sense of hope or fairness or belonging, with consequences we see all around us.

2. Racism as a Root of the Immediate Risk Factors

Deep concerns about racism pervaded our consultations. We were taken aback by the extent to which racism is alive and well and wreaking its deeply harmful effects on Ontarians and on the very fabric of this province.

We were taken aback not because we believed that Ontario had become free of racism, but because we believed that far more would have been accomplished in this direction in the more than 30 years since we were first active in getting this matter recognized by the general public, and embraced by governments, as a priority issue. We felt that progress had been made in those early years when the Ontario government took the initiative to increase the public's awareness of the devastating impact of racism on our quest for both economic and social strength, and also took the lead in combating racism. We had assumed that progress was continuing to be made even though the discourse was less evident. Recent instances of racial profiling and other related matters of course kept the issue alive for us as it did for many, but perhaps hid the depths to which racism is ever more embedded throughout our society.

In connecting with a new generation of youth through this review, and hearing from front-line service providers and community leaders in more direct and intense ways than we had in recent years, the startling degree to which racism continues to plague this province was driven home to us. This racism affects all racialized groups in Ontario.

Racialized groups are highly diverse, and the manifestations of racism affect them differently. Most encounter subtle and systemic barriers, including "glass ceilings" and other limits on their ability to participate fully in society. Others, in particular Blacks, continue to also suffer from a seemingly more entrenched and often more virulent form of racism. Sadly, the following comments of Stephen Lewis in his 1992 report to the then Premier remain apposite:

> First, what we are dealing with, at root, and fundamentally, is anti-Black racism. While it is obviously true that every visible minority community experiences the indignities and wounds of systemic discrimination throughout Southern Ontario, it is the Black community which is the focus. It is Blacks who are being shot, it is Black youth that is unemployed in excessive numbers, it is Black students who are being inappropriately streamed in schools, it is Black kids who are disproportionately dropping out, it is housing communities with large concentrations of Black residents where the sense of vulnerability and disadvantage is most acute, it is Black employees, professional and non-professional, on whom the doors of upward equity slam shut. Just as the soothing balm of 'multiculturalism' cannot mask racism, so racism cannot mask its primary target (Lewis, 1992: 2).

Searing as this reality remains for African-Canadians, and applicable as much of it is to Aboriginals, they are not the only targets of racism. Throughout our meetings, whether with youth, service providers or government officials, racism was regularly raised as serious and pressing, especially in relation to how it affects economic outcomes for many groups.

Indeed, particular attention must be paid to the racialization of poverty in Ontario. As Prof. Michael Ornstein's study of socio-economic differences among racialized groups in Toronto demonstrated, the income difference between European and non-European groups has grown steadily since the 1970s (Ornstein, 2006). He found that, as of 2001,

> 40 per cent of the members of African ethno-racial groups are below Statistics Canada's *low income cut-off,* compared to 30 per cent for the Arab and West Asian groups and about 20 per cent for the South Asian, East Asian, Caribbean and South and Central American ethno-racial groups. The figure for European ethno-racial groups is 10.8 per cent (Ornstein, 2006: 83).

Prof. Ornstein also observed that:

> [t]hese figures on the extent of poverty represent the *average* condition of entire communities in Toronto. In a highly individualistic society, it is easier to think about a person or family living in poverty, and often in the context of bad luck. Indeed, research shows that losing a job and dissolution of a family are the events that most often result in a person's becoming poor. What these tables describe is the quite different idea of an entire community where the average income is very low and many, many people live in poverty. Even ethno-racial groups with the highest income experience some poverty. Once overall poverty levels in a group reach 20 or 25 per cent, it is no longer possible to think of poverty as the unfortunate result of unusual circumstances….
>
> The poverty and income statistics … describe a community in which the experience of extreme disadvantage is highly racialized. Every one of the twenty poorest ethno-racial groups is non-European. Moreover, there are huge differences in the extent of poverty dividing the distinct ethno-racial groups into global regions. The differences in average incomes are less dramatic, but still demonstrate a highly racialized divide between rich and poor (80–81).

This focus on the intersection of racism and poverty is not to deny that middle-class members of these groups experience racism, including in ways that also disillusion youth and contribute to their sense of alienation and lack of opportunity or hope. We agree, though, with those we met who made it clear that it is racism combined with poverty that has the greatest connection to the issues facing this review.

In our discussions, we heard not only of deteriorating police relations with racialized youth, but also of barriers to creating a representative public service and teaching force, of an education curriculum that discourages racialized youth because it does not include people like them in the history of this province, of a lack of opportunity and role models in many parts of society, and of the continuing and devastating impacts of racial profiling in many aspects of day-to-day living in this province.

Indeed, the Supreme Court of Canada has put to rest any doubts that could reasonably be raised about the pervasiveness of racism in this country. In its 2005 R. *v.* Spence decision, the Court said:

> The courts have acknowledged that racial prejudice against visible minorities is…notorious and indisputable…[it is] a social fact not capable of reasonable dispute (R. *v.* Spence, [2005] 3 S.C.R. 458, para. 5).

And yet, there are fewer public structures in place to address this reality than we had in the past. There is no recent record of strong statements from the government about the manifold ways in which racism is dividing our society, denying opportunity and defeating the hopes of our youth. There is no Cabinet Committee on Race Relations, no Anti-Racism Secretariat, no Race Relations and Policing Directorate, few if any Mayors' Committees on Race Relations; in short, most of the structures needed to confront and address racism no longer exist.

A modest step in the right direction is found in the re-establishment, in legislation that came into effect in the summer of 2008, of a small body within the Ontario Human Rights Commission to bring some anti-racism focus to its ongoing, and now to be re-energized, public policy role across the entirety of its broad mandate. But this is not located at the core of the provincial government. And while we are pleased to see some movement by the Province in the direction of gathering data to address racism, neither this nor the commission's role is enough to deal with the issues nor to give hope and confidence that they will be dealt with.

Why do racism and Ontario's inadequate public response to it matter so much? At the most fundamental level, they matter so much because racism is a fundamental wrong that brutally denies the inherent dignity and worth of those who are its victims, and will undermine our society and weaken our future if it is not addressed. And, in terms of the specific mandate the Premier gave us, they matter so much because racism is one of the central conditions that can produce the immediate risk factors for violence.

It is important to stress that we speak in terms of racism, not race. Race has nothing to do with violence. No race is inherently more violent than another, even assuming for the moment that it makes sense to speak of distinct races, as opposed to speaking of people who have been placed into racial categories, or "racialized."

Studies and experience show that if the negative circumstances in which many racialized groups live are neutralized, their involvement in violence is no different than that of any other group. As we were advised in England, there are well-documented circumstances that produce alienation and the other immediate risk factors, and the sad reality is that a disproportionate number of racialized groups are subjected to those circumstances. It is because of that subjection, and not their race, that they are disproportionately present in the groups we are concerned about.

But while race is not something that creates a risk of the immediate risk factors for violence involving youth, racism is. Racism strikes at the core of self-identity, eats away the heart and casts a shadow on the soul. It is cruel and hurtful and alienating. It makes real all doubts about getting a fair chance in this society. Whether seen as a barrier or a hurdle, it is a serious obstacle imposed for a reason the victim has no control over, and can do nothing about.

And there is no doubt that racism is pervasive in Ontario. As noted in the paper prepared for us by Prof. Rinaldo Walcott and his colleagues:

> Racism takes many forms: from individual insults, stereotypes and physical violence, to more wide-ranging practices that involve systemic practices of deliberate exclusion from the nation's institutions, to unconscious ways of privileging whites, to disadvantaging racialized people through social and cultural networks, to cultural assumptions and practices which place non-white or racial minorities outside legitimate avenues of power and decision-making. Racism is both historical and contemporary; it changes over time, but it also builds on its history to accrue the power to name, place and displace, and by so doing to render violence on those at its receiving end — those whom racism makes into racial minorities through history and through the power to control the lives of other human beings (Volume 4: 322).

That many overcome these multiple manifestations of racism and succeed, become role models and inspire us all does not detract from the fact that, for many, it can lead to violence: there is a clear and devastating link among oppression, poverty, racism and a lack of belonging. To again cite Prof. Walcott and his colleagues:

> Racial minority scholars studying violence and crime in North America have by and large reached the consensus that ideas of race, practices of racism and the history of racial oppression play a fundamental, significant and determining factor

> in the outcome of violence and crime among certain groups or communities… the history of racial oppression plays a primary role in the manner in which violence and crime are experienced and practised within, among and beyond marginalized groups in their communities (Volume 4: 320).

The very real potential for this to create the immediate risk factors should not be hard to understand. How can it not erode your self-esteem to feel that, no matter what you do or what you achieve, you can be excluded or undervalued simply because of your race? How can it not be alienating to know that you can be or have often been stopped by the police or followed in a store or denied housing for that same reason? How could your willingness to study and work hard to get ahead not be eroded by a clear sense of having more limited prospects than others, and how could that not reduce your sense of hope? When society can at any time, overtly or covertly, single you out for negative attention or cut you off from opportunity because of your race, how can you feel connected to or bonded with or invested in that society, or fail to feel confused about your value to the community and anger towards an unresponsive social structure?

And, as well, when you look to society's major institutions for leadership in confronting these insidious realities and find almost no focus on this issue, how can all those feelings not be made more deeply hurtful and exclusionary? This is all the more so when today's racism takes place in the shadow of a long history of racism and exclusion, often led and generally supported by governments of the day. This history, some of it quite recent, is a lens through which racialized groups view their current interactions with the rest of society, and necessarily undercuts relationships with governments and the police when they are not clearly positioned as leaders in the work to end racism.

For these reasons, it is apparent to us that all of the immediate risk factors for violence involving youth can easily arise from the diminished sense of worth that results from being subject to racism, and from the often accurate inference of what that racism means for the hopes of advancing, prospering and having a fair chance in our society. When, as is so often the case, racism is combined with poverty and other sources of serious disadvantage discussed in this chapter, its central role in the issue that concerns us is all too evident.

3. The Impact of Community Design on Violence Involving Youth

Introduction

The conditions of the communities where young people live not only greatly affect the quality of their lives and the opportunities available to them, but also how they perceive themselves, society and their role in it. According to the Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition (www.healthycommunities.on.ca), the qualities of a healthy community include: a clean and safe physical environment; adequate access to safety and recreation; learning and skill-development opportunities; strong, supportive relationships and networks; and broad participation of residents in decision-making. Unfortunately, many youth do not live in such communities.

In Section 1 of this chapter, we outlined how concentrations of poverty and the circumstances that often accompany poverty can give rise to the immediate risk factors for violence involving youth. In this section, we will expand the analysis to explore how the physical conditions in many different parts of our province, rural as well as urban, can have the same regrettable impacts. There are obvious overlaps between the two sections, with the main distinction being that the conditions discussed in this section can operate independently of very low economic status, although they often coincide with it in multiply disadvantaging ways.

Regrettably, right across Ontario there are many examples of poor planning and poor design of the built and the developed natural environment, creating places that make some youth feel powerless and isolated, leading them to believe that their options are as limited as their horizons. In addition to the already-discussed conditions that attach specifically to poverty, these negative factors include: physical and psychological isolation from the broader community; bleak landscapes with no inviting places to gather or play and little usable green space; a lack of adequate and accessible social and physical infrastructure; limited or non-existent transportation services; and unsafe streets, common areas and passageways. All of these are too often accompanied by a dispiriting failure to involve youth in designing or planning how to use the space in which they are destined to spend much of their time.

While these conditions garner the most attention in large urban areas, poor planning, design and use of space are not just an urban phenomenon. Some small towns and rural and remote communities are poorly planned and designed, or do not have or commit the resources to provide for their youth. Although each area is unique in many ways, including their histories, design, population and industries, the neighbourhoods we visited in Thunder Bay, London, Hamilton, Toronto and Ottawa, and others we were told about during our review, all seemed to require youth to struggle with similar issues.

Isolation

In our meetings with communities and youth, we heard that housing, and not only social housing, was often unsafe and unhealthy for residents, including youth. In the earlier section on poverty, we discussed the impact on youth of poor-quality housing units, and are fully aware that this issue resonates across the province, often being worse in smaller towns where affordable housing is limited.

Apart from the quality and affordability of housing, we are particularly concerned about the isolation that many youth face because of their housing situation. In rural areas, this can be primarily a function of distance; in some urban areas, it can result from the fact that much of the affordable housing consists of clusters of aging apartment complexes, surrounded by large open spaces with few amenities (e.g., grocery stores or community centres) within walking distance. This presents a major physical barrier for youth and essentially creates an island, making it difficult for youth in these neighbourhoods to come and go.

We were, for example, surprised by the number of times we were told of youth who seldom leave their neighbourhoods. In Toronto, we were told that when some youth from priority neighbourhoods are taken downtown, they react to it as something seen previously on television, as if they were visiting a foreign country they had previously seen in a documentary. This is in part due to inadequate transportation, but can also be attributed to a very real feeling of social exclusion from the rest of the city.

In smaller towns, where distance may not be an issue, this same sense of social exclusion can be produced simply by the way youth are looked at or treated by residents, merchants or the police when they enter the "better" parts of town. In a number of ways, these youth can be made to feel different and unwanted, leading them to spend large parts of their lives in their own islands of isolation even in areas that are near better-off areas.

Whatever the cause, the sense of exclusion from the broader and better-off society can easily lead to alienation, impulsivity and a lack of any sense of belonging, as well as depriving youth of positive influences and broader horizons. It can also increase the time spent with youth who have no ambition other than to profit from a neighbourhood's disadvantages by exploiting them to further their own, often illegal, ends.

Transportation

In addition to the physical and psychological isolation that can arise from a lack of decent housing, and the self-perceived difference between youth living there and the broader society, isolation can also be a function of poor transportation. For many youth living in rural or remote areas, transportation is an enormous barrier. Often, there is little or no public transportation, placing those with no or limited access to cars at a further disadvantage. As well, often youth must travel a great distance from their home to go to school, leaving them little time to socialize in the communities where they go to school, or in their own communities when they return to them at the end of a long day. As a result, they can be isolated from both.

Similarly, an increasing number of young people growing up in Ontario suburbs find it hard to get around. Many newly planned subdivisions were designed around the use of a car and on the assumption that they would be populated by middle-class families, for whom this would not be an issue. As the poor are increasingly forced into these suburbs by trends discussed elsewhere in this report, the failure to plan for adequate public transportation becomes not just a significant environmental issue, but also a major isolating force for youth.

Even where there is public transit, it can still pose a barrier for some urban youth. They may not be able to afford to use it, or the system may not adequately serve their neighbourhoods and the places they need to get to. Youth have told us that they have to wait a long time for buses in their area, sometimes in bus shelters located in isolated areas that are unsafe for youth, particularly after dark. This greatly limits young people's mobility, causing youth to stay isolated within their neighbourhoods.

Not only is this isolation itself potentially dangerous for the reasons discussed above, but it can have other negative impacts as well. For example, when it takes two or three transfers and a couple of hours to get to a job interview, for which a youth already feels disadvantaged, that reality, plus the cost of transportation, can constitute a real barrier to the will to search for work.

When youth do get work, the transportation costs can seriously erode part-time minimum wage earnings, such that the cost-benefit analysis, when the cost and the time required to get to and from work are taken into account, is often not favourable to working part time. These youth are then not only then faced with limited economic resources in the short run, but as well do not build the kind of work history that would make them attractive to future employers. When these youth ultimately have to compete for jobs with better-off (or sometimes just better-located) youth who have built a resume, and who also do not face the kind of discrimination by postal code discussed in Section 1, this short-term disadvantage can take on serious longer-term consequences.

Youth are perceptive. They not only understand the immediate, structural discouragement from engagement in economic activities that would help build a solid future, but also fully realize that they are going to be disadvantaged as a result.

At the same time, the location of much of the lower-cost housing, and the accompanying poor transportation options, means that working parents face long commutes to work, an issue that is magnified when they are holding down more than one marginal job. This travel time creates obvious pressures and stresses, and also means that these parents have limited time or energy at the end of the working day or week to engage with their children, much less with the broader local community.

When whole communities live this way, not only do youth have less access to their parents, but also there are just fewer adults around to engage with casually and positively as role models or mentors. There are also fewer adults with the time and energy to coach teams, organize and lobby for facilities and space, supervise play areas, or just generally contribute to an active and positive street life in the community.

The children of these parents not only often lack an energized and engaged parent, but as an obvious corollary, also have a large amount of unsupervised time every day. When the community cannot fill after-school and weekend time with positive activities, the potential for disengagement at best, and involvement with the wrong kind of peers at worst, is obvious. For those youth who are suspended or expelled from school, or drop out, the lack of any supervision for 10 or 12 consecutive hours a day can even more easily feed engagement with exactly the wrong kinds of peers.

While the negative impacts of the combination of the location of these communities and poor transportation options are serious, we are by no means suggesting that they all lack a strong sense of community and "organic" support structures to deal with their challenges. As with so many of the issues we are raising, the issue is that the policies of all orders of government sometimes frustrate those community strengths, rather than supporting and building upon them.

Space for Play and Community Building

The isolation created by the design of some neighbourhoods and by issues of transportation and limited access to the broader community is made worse when there are few opportunities within these physically or psychologically isolated neighbourhoods for youth to play or socialize, or for youth or adults to meet to engage in even the most rudimentary forms of community building. In the Grassroots Youth Collaborative (GYC) Report, *Rooted in Action*, they state:

> ... Many times young people live in small apartments sharing accommodations with a lot of family members. These young people need space to hang out with friends, quiet space to do their homework, a safe place that is free from police harassment/brutality, to express themselves in the arts and to access social-recreational programming. Community Centres and programs run by mainstream social service providers that have facilities are not 'youth-friendly' or accessible to youth, especially Black youth (Volume 3: 137).

Indeed, the lack of space was one of the loudest messages we heard: youth and those working with them repeatedly expressed a need for youth-specific space within their communities. Far too many disadvantaged neighbourhoods lack space for youth to play sports, engage in the arts, dance or just hang out. This includes a lack of open and attractive green space for young people. While sometimes overlooked in the drive to obtain sports and recreation complexes, green space is important to the health and well-being of young people.

Even where green space appears to be available, many of the youth we talked to told us that they still do not have anywhere to play or socialize. Often, adults design existing open space for adults or young children but not youth. Other times, the space is designed for activities that are of limited or no interest to the youth now living in these neighbourhoods. And in some areas, youth, particularly youth of colour, feel discriminated against in public space by adults who fear that they are in a gang or up to no good and who seek to discourage them from using these places.

Similar issues arise in relation to the availability of indoor facilities for sports or arts or other forms of engagement. To begin with, there is the reality, discussed above in Section 1, that often the neighbourhoods that now contain much of the low-cost housing are poorly served by such facilities. This is a shocking shortcoming given the plain and obvious impact of youth having no positive outlet for their energy and time, no place or facilities for creative self-expression and no place that fosters contact with coaches and other positive mentors.

Where they do exist, the recreation or other spaces within community centres are often booked by seniors' or other local community groups or by people from outside the community who have the time and the organizational structure to compete for space, and the money to pay the fees. Indeed, we heard story after story of youth hanging around a local rec centre while the facility was being used by adults who had driven in from considerable distances away. Not only are these youth denied access to nearby facilities, and thus visibly reminded of their lack of status in society, but they are often also then stigmatized and harassed for hanging around outside the facilities from which they have been shut out.

The lack of space also means that those who want to put on programs for or with youth have no place to do so, or have to spend an inordinate amount of time chasing often fleeting opportunities to obtain access to space. To again cite the GYC Report:

> The bureaucracy that community organizations must go through in their attempts at securing space for youth programming is highly unnecessary — not to mention counterproductive.
>
> Vathany Uthayasundaram, the former Program Coordinator at Canadian Tamil Youth Development Centre…described the 'drawn-out and oft unsuccessful bureaucratic process to get space for a basketball drop-in…. [W]e have to run around asking all the community centers for a gym... some [of which] are pre-booked a year ahead of time.... And then there's funding for permits... There is a whole process you have to go through.... You call a certain department and then you fill out an application and then take it to another department.. but you don't have that time... and are often unsuccessful, and youth don't understand the process.... We have money issues, space issues, permit issues!' [S]taff are usually underpaid and over-worked — and the tasks involved in simply securing space often take valuable physical and human resources out of the organization's programming (Volume 3: 136).

Outside the public sphere, the exclusionary results are often the same. We were told that many landlords do not want to rent to youth-led or youth-serving organizations, thus feeding the very problem that causes them to be nervous about having concentrations of youth in and around their premises. When youth organizations do manage to find space, they can all too easily be forced out of it because of rent increases, redevelopment or the property changing ownership.

Overall, the shortage of space puts youth on the streets, exposing them to negative peers and negative interactions with residents and the police. At the same time, it deprives them of the positive development that comes from engagement in sports or arts or involvement with positive peers, youth workers and community leaders in activities that would build their skills, confidence, optimism and belief in their futures.

Designing for Crime

The social conditions in some neighbourhoods, including the lack of space for residents to meet to socialize and build collective strengths, can lead to disorganization and a retreat from the use of public space, and thus make those neighbourhoods unsafe. As well, in some of these neighbourhoods the lack of safety has regrettably, if inadvertently, been designed right into the community.

We are all familiar with the design trends of the early and middle parts of the last century, which created enclaves of apartments and other housing surrounded by open space and separated as much as possible from through traffic, shops and services. While well intended, this fosters a sense of isolation, makes access difficult for the police and other services and reduces the amount of active street life in these neighbourhoods. When combined with cul-de-sacs, narrow walkways and other design features that reduce sightlines, and often also with poor lighting, these features easily create natural havens for drug dealing and other crime.

As fewer people use the public areas for socialization, the space is ceded to those who want to use it for crime. This of course fuels the sense that the area is unsafe, and discourages more people from using it, thus driving the downward cycle for the area.

This makes it easy for gangs to control, or appear to control, access to public spaces. A few apparent gang members in a passageway or on an empty street, or a single youth in a courtyard who seems to have a gun, or actually displays one, can isolate hundreds of people. As well, within some neighbourhoods, the resulting gangs and gang rivalry have made neighbourhoods unsafe for youth and have actually divided neighbourhoods into areas under the control of different gangs. Many youth simply do not feel safe walking through their own neighbourhoods for fear of being caught in gang territory.

The results of these developments are doubly dangerous. First, the isolation and fear cut off access to positive programs and engagement, which would help youth advance in positive ways. And second, youth who do not want to stay in their small and often crowded apartments are encouraged to engage with gangs to secure access to a life otherwise denied to them. In both ways, the risks of creating the immediate risk factors for violence involving youth are significantly increased.

We note in this connection that, while not a consequence of design, similar impacts arise in some cities and towns where a declining economy has meant that some areas or streets have become unused and isolated. They become areas where it is not seen as safe to walk around since there are no shops or activities to bring people into the streets to create positive social interactions and create many of the same issues.

Youth Engagement in Planning

Young people have much of value to say about how to plan and design space for youth. They are the future stewards of our neighbourhoods, towns and cities, and they will determine the conditions that will be passed on to the next generations. To listen to them and include them in the planning and design of the built and natural environment would benefit us all.

And yet, municipal and provincial planning and design processes are not traditionally inclusive of youth, and especially not of youth who are racialized minorities. While there have been some attempts to involve youth in open-space planning to create more inclusive parks, these are far from common and do not extend to broader design issues. There is a significant gap between youth perspectives on town and regional planning and design in the province, and how that design and planning is carried on. The result is not only spaces that exclude youth and make them feel out of place, but as well a message of disinterest in youth and a lost opportunity for positive engagement.

Conclusion

Neighbourhoods should be places of safety, nurturing, fun and engagement for youth. When instead they isolate, discourage, deny opportunity and increase the risk of and involvement in violence, they become sources of serious concern. A concerted effort to remedy this reality in Ontario must be at the heart of any plan that seeks to make sustainable progress in addressing the roots of violence involving youth.

4. The Education System as a Root of the Immediate Risk Factors

Introduction

Education, of course, provides vital opportunities for social development and personal growth. It increases employment opportunities and the chances of financial stability and thereby positions individuals to obtain better housing, health and well-being. Education is universally seen as one of the best ways out of poverty and as a sound investment in the future of individuals, families and communities, and thus in the social fabric of our entire society. How then have we come to include some elements of the education system in Ontario among the roots of the immediate risk factors for violence involving youth? Sadly, and sometimes tragically, there are several reasons.

In this section, we discuss five problematic elements of Ontario's education system: safe schools policies, the curriculum, the approach sometimes taken to guidance and counselling, the composition and training of the teaching force and the way the education system can contribute to the excessive criminalization of youth. As a preface to that discussion, we note with dismay the fact that it is now more than 16 years since Stephen Lewis wrote to the then Premier in the following terms:

> Undoubtedly, some progress has been made. But often, as I listened to students of all ages and all backgrounds speak out at the many gatherings we had, it was as though we were back to square one. The lack of real progress is shocking....
>
> Everywhere, the refrain of the Toronto students, however starkly amended by different schools and different locations, was essentially the refrain of all students. Where are the courses in Black history? Where are the visible minority teachers? Why are there so few role models? Why do our white guidance counsellors know so little of different cultural backgrounds? Why are racist incidents and epithets tolerated? Why are there double standards of discipline? Why are minority students streamed? Why do they discourage us from University? Where are we going to find jobs? What's the use of having an education if there's no employment? How long does it take to change the curriculum so that we're part of it? (Lewis, 1992: 20–21)

While we are very deeply concerned by the seeming intractability of these issues, we also want to applaud the very significant efforts of the majority of educators to do their best for all children in the education system. We applaud not only their commitment, but their many successes. The system indeed works well for a large number of students. The issues we raise in this chapter are all at a systemic level: they affect far too many youth, but they are failures of vision and oversight, rather than the failures of individuals.

Safe Schools Policies

Near the top of the list of issues brought to our attention by youth and adults alike throughout the course of our review was the application of the safe schools provisions of the *Education Act*. Under these provisions, many youth have been suspended or expelled from school without a full consideration of their circumstances and without adequate supports to maintain their learning or occupy their time in positive ways. In the opinion of the Ontario Human Rights Commission, supported by almost everyone we spoke to, the safe schools provisions have had a disproportionate impact on racialized students and students with disabilities.

They also have had a disproportionate impact on youth whose parents are not adept or at ease in dealing with teachers and school administrators. These include the children of many recent immigrants who, as we discuss later in this chapter, have not had adequate settlement services. They also include youth who are living in neighbourhoods where low income is the norm, where there is inadequate housing and a lack of appropriate social services and supports. And they include youth whose parents face long commutes to work and often have to hold down more than one job, leaving them with limited time to engage with the school to forestall suspensions, or to engage with their children to ameliorate the worst effects if they are suspended.

We recognize that the recent amendments to the *Education Act* in relation to the safe schools provisions are a positive step. But, as we set out in Chapter 9, we believe they fall short of what is required to deal with the serious systemic issues that were brought to our attention. And we are also very concerned that Ontario will have to deal with the long-term consequences of the previous policies, in force from September 2001 to early 2008, and the gaps in the new policy, noted in Chapter 9, for a long time to come.

The safe schools provisions promoted a policy of "zero tolerance" for "bad" behaviour in schools. The provisions gave individual school boards the authority to establish policies in relation to safety, access to school premises and procedural matters governing suspensions or expulsions. They included mandatory suspensions ranging from one day by a teacher and up to 20 days by a teacher or principal of a pupil who committed the following infractions: uttering a threat to inflict serious bodily harm on another person; possessing alcohol or illegal drugs; being under the influence of alcohol; swearing at a teacher or at another person in a position of authority; committing an act of vandalism that causes extensive damage to school property; or engaging in another activity that, under a policy of the board, is one for which a suspension is mandatory.

The provisions also provided for mandatory expulsions from 21 days to a year by principals related to the following infractions: possessing a weapon; using a weapon to cause or threaten harm; committing physical or sexual assault; trafficking in weapons or in illegal drugs; committing robbery; giving alcohol to a minor; or engaging in another activity that, under a policy of the board, is one for which a suspension is mandatory.

No one can dispute that a student's involvement in any of the above activities is cause for serious concern. However, in relation to the 2001 provisions, the issue is with the rigid approach taken to deal with behaviours, discipline and safety problems without consideration of mitigating factors, such as:

- The student's inability to control his or her behaviour or understand the consequences of the behaviour because of a disability
- Failing to evaluate the risk to safety of any person if the student remained in school prior to expelling the pupil
- Reaction to racism and racist bullying.

In our view, "safe schools" should also mean an environment that is inclusive of students from different ethno-racial backgrounds and different abilities and skills.

What is unfortunate about Ontario's use of the safe schools provisions is that, well before they were adopted, empirical studies in the United States from as early as 1974, the United Kingdom and Nova Scotia all pointed to the disproportionate impact of suspensions and expulsions on racialized students and students with disabilities. For many years, Black parents in Ontario have experienced the underachievement, streaming and high dropout rates of their children within the educational system. The move towards "zero tolerance" for behaviours that were deemed "anti-social," without understanding the ethno-racial, socio-economic and cultural context of the students and their families, could only result in the expulsions and suspensions of children who were already marginalized and seen as underachievers.

In preparing a report for the Ontario Human Rights Commission on the effects of suspensions and expulsions, Ken Bhattacharjee, an independent human rights consultant, reviewed the academic studies about the experience in the United States, the United Kingdom and Nova Scotia and interviewed educators, lawyers, advocates, social workers, trustees and students. He cited an American study that pointed to long-term detrimental effects on children. The report also cites evidence to make the following points about the application of zero-tolerance policies in discipline matters:

> There are long-term detrimental consequences for the child, including loss of educational opportunities and an increased risk of dropping out, engaging in conduct that affects the safety of their families and communities and incarceration (The Advancement Project and the Civil Rights Project, 2000, cited in Bhattacharjee, 2003: 21).

Mr. Bhattacharjee also reported that "[m]any interviewees believe that the application of zero tolerance leads to increased criminalization of students," (57) and that "some interviewees believe that suspension and expulsion can have a fairly serious negative impact on the student" (53).

For students who were already facing socio-economic barriers, learning disabilities, racism, isolation and other factors, and living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, the punitive and exclusionary nature of the safe schools provisions became another factor that harmed their development as individuals and promoted alienation, disengagement and a lack of hope for the future.

The effects of the policy were made even worse by the fact that, until this spring the *Education Act* did not create an obligation to provide a student who was suspended for less than 20 days with learning programs or lesson plans. The recent report by Toronto's School Community Safety Advisory Panel (Falconer report) confirmed that the majority of suspensions lasted five days or less and noted that "a significant amount of school time can nonetheless be missed when a student is suspended several times in one school year" (School Community Safety Advisory Panel, 2008, Volume 3: 499).

Community workers who interact with students who are Aboriginal, Black, Tamil or Latino point out that students who were suspended without any lesson plans, or expelled with no particular motivation to attend strict discipline programs, were more susceptible to making contact with other youth who were having difficulties. Often these youth were involved in both violent and non-violent anti-social behaviours. They also noted that suspensions and expulsions led to dropping out of school entirely.

Many of the youth who dropped out stayed at home with no or limited parental supervision or on the streets with no life skills, job skills or marketable education. The Bhattacharjee Report noted observations of front-line community workers, including that these youth became targets for drug dealers and prime recruits for gangs. Youth who frequented the streets and malls because they were not in school during the day came under the scrutiny of the police. These contacts escalated police supervision of these youth and sometimes this increased policing led to their being criminalized earlier (Bhattacharjee, 2003: 58–59).

In the United Kingdom, the effects of school exclusion and its links to later criminal behaviour were noted in a report entitled *Exclusion of Black Pupils: Priority Review, Getting It, Getting It Right:*

> Exclusion from school is widely recognized as a driver for wider social exclusion. It is highly correlated with unemployment and involvement in crime. In the words of Martin Narey, Director General of HM Prison Service (2001):
>
> > 'The 13,000 young people excluded from school each year might as well be given a date by which to join the prison service some time later down the line' (Department for Education and Skills, 2006: 16).

This concern was borne out six years later in a report by Britain's House of Commons Home Affairs Committee. The committee noted that recent surveys had demonstrated "the direct link between school exclusions and involvement in the criminal justice system" (Home Affairs Committee, 2007: 33).

In sum, the safe schools provisions of the *Education Act* that were intended to promote safety and prevent bullying resulted in the marginalization of significant numbers of an entire generation of the most vulnerable youth within the province. This has had a devastating effect on students and their families as they had to deal with not only the academic consequences, but also the issues of self-esteem and stigmatization within the schools and their communities.

Curriculum

One of the major concerns about the education system in Ontario is the issue of the curriculum. The provincial curriculum defines the learning environment in our schools, including the learning materials and teaching practices. Academics who have studied the impact of curriculum on communities recognize that the curriculum can create barriers to student learning.

A report titled *Towards a New Beginning* pointed out that the Ontario school curriculum is "largely reflective of European presence, settlement and development of Canada and as such provides little or no incentive for Black Canadians to develop pride in their African heritage" (Four-Level Government/African Canadian Community Working Group, 1992: 78). As already noted, Stephen Lewis reported in 1992 that students informed him little had changed in the schools over a 10-year period regarding the lack of courses in Black history, lack of books written by Black authors and the streaming of Black students in Toronto's schools (Lewis, 1992: 20).

The Eurocentricity of the curriculum in our schools continues to be a refrain that is echoed by parents and students from non-European ethno-racial heritages across the province, including the Aboriginal communities. Fourteen years after Stephen Lewis's report, a major youth conference in Toronto highlighted the ongoing and very serious concerns of youth on this same issue. The organizers of that conference, the Grassroots Youth Collaborative, again found the issue to be a major concern of youth in the work they did for this review in 2008 (Volume 3: 29). The recent Falconer report also highlighted this issue, and recommended that curriculum reform be implemented (School Community Safety Advisory Panel, 2008, recommendation 41).

We were told of the use of stereotypes and also of the failure to include the negative history of Canada's interaction with Aboriginal peoples, the institution of slavery, exclusionary race-based immigration policies and so on. For many in Ontario, these facts continue to shape their current experience of life in this province and it is hard to see how we can be an inclusive society without a widespread appreciation of them.

Some progress has been made on those two fronts, although more remains to be done. However, despite long-standing calls for it, there is a continuing failure of the mainstream curriculum to acknowledge the many historically significant contributions of racialized people. For youth who are developing their identities, this signals that:

- Races other than Europeans have not made valuable contributions to the social, cultural and economic development of Canada and the world.
- Racialized people have not made scientific and medical discoveries and advancements.
- Racialized students and their ancestors' countries of origin are poor and backward and therefore their heritage, beliefs and values are neither relevant nor worthwhile.
- They and their families are of lesser importance to society.
- They can only succeed in certain subjects and their success and/or achievements may not be recognized.
- They are inferior to their peers.
- They have to look to other non-education-related disciplines to succeed.
- Their sense of belonging is threatened.

For students who are already struggling with their education, dealing with the issues of racism and seeing the daily struggle of adults in their lives to achieve success, hearing this silence or negativity related to their backgrounds can be just as devastating for their educational achievement as the suspensions and expulsions. Britain's Department of Education and Skills, in its *Diversity and Citizenship, Curriculum Review,* included the following quote from a book by Charles Taylor:

> [...] a person or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves. Non-recognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false distorted mode of being (Taylor, 2004, cited in Department for Education and Skills, 2004: 29).

Amanda Robinson, a journalism student, in her article entitled *In Black or White?*, noted that educators like Prof. George Dei of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education have found that students are dropping out of school because the curriculum does not speak to their experiences. She interviewed Lloyd McKell, now the executive officer, Student and Community Equity, for the Toronto District School Board, who also linked school drop-out rates to the culturally exclusive curriculum. Ms Robinson quoted Mr. McKell as saying, "When we looked behind the reasons why students were dropping out, we found out that what mattered to students was how they saw themselves reflected in the school environment" (Robinson, 2007).

It is clear that students who do not see themselves reflected in the curriculum will experience a lesser degree of attachment to the education system. The malaise that results affects the self-esteem of our youth and contributes to their social marginalization and their disengagement from their education. This, in turn, can lead to dropping out of school, involvement in street life with anti-social activities, and a severe reduction in their economic and social prospects. The connections to the immediate risk factors for violence involving youth are all too plain to see.

Guidance and Counselling Services

Youth turn to guidance counsellors for information about course and career options. Yet, to many students and their parents, many of these important professionals have not demonstrated an in-depth understanding of the complexity of the factors that affect the ethno-racial youth who seek their advice. For many, guidance advice often appears to be given from a perspective of low expectations based on the ethno-racial background of the youth. In 1992, just months after Stephen Lewis's report, another report, *Towards a New*

Beginning, cited a position paper describing how racialized students and parents were concerned, as one student put it, that "Black students with ability and ambition [were] discouraged and turned off by guidance." The researcher reported that in seeking guidance counselling, African-Canadian students were confronted with the "worst outcome scenario of their career potential" (Daenzer, 1992, cited in Four-Level Governnment/African Canadian Community Working Group, 1992: 78).

This conveying of negative and limited expectations to students from certain ethno-racial backgrounds has resulted in the streaming of particular groups into basic courses. This streaming can seriously affect the students' employability and entry into post-secondary institutions, leaving them with limited options for their future and a continued relegation to the underclass of society. In a similar vein, Black students who have demonstrated athletic abilities are often encouraged to pursue these activities, sometimes to the detriment of their academic studies. The encouragement of these abilities is often seen as stereotypical and discriminatory. Many parents voice concerns that their children will be less likely to focus on academics as they will see sport as an easy way to gain short-term recognition and success.

Unfortunately, low expectations and streaming continue to be common. In our recent consultations, one student referred to guidance counsellors as "dream busters." While this perhaps overstates the case, and overlooks those counsellors who do work well with racialized students, it is a powerful articulation of the depth of the concern in some communities. When those concerns are well-founded, we agree that the resulting feelings of being misunderstood and excluded can only add to the tensions within the schools, and to the alienation of students and their families.

Teachers and Administrators

Teachers are instrumental in ensuring that our youth are learning. However, beyond the expertise related to the subjects being taught, teachers also play a fundamental role in transmitting values and perspectives to our youth. Their own experiences can influence how they interact with the students and the parents of those students. For some students, their experiences with teachers are similar to the negative experiences with guidance counsellors discussed above.

Students, families, communities and advocates have long been struggling with the low expectations some teachers have for racialized students and, in particular, Black students. Stephen Lewis discussed these low expectations as factors leading to the alienation of Black students (Lewis, 1992). Ten years later, Janice Acton and Diana

Abraham, facilitators of a forum in Toronto to discuss the impact of violence and racism on the health and well-being of the Black community, reported that Black parents had again highlighted the devaluation of the achievements of Black students, especially boys. The authors quote a parent who said that boys seem "to be just marking time until they go to a super jail" and that "our young boys are not achieving because of low expectations.... our girls learn that they don't have to learn because they'll have a child soon" (Acton with Abraham, 2003). In 2005, the Black community was again pointing to low expectations and streaming as catalysts for Black youth being on the street and susceptible to anti-social and criminal activity (Robinson, 2007). In 2008, *The Road to Health* points to the same limited expectations as a significant reason for student disengagement (School Community Safety Advisory Panel, 2008: 448).

Coupled with these low expectations is the lack of representation of racialized teachers and administrators within the school system. Parents and communities have continuously raised the issue of the absence of teachers who could understand the particular nuances and struggles experienced by racialized children, and of the lack of role models for their children. It is not that white teachers could not be sympathetic to and trained to be supportive of racialized students; it is that racialized students can speak more freely to someone of their own background and express certain ideas without feeling embarrassment or having to explain their cultural perspective.

As well, for racialized students, the absence of successful people who look like them, with whom they can identify, and who understand the cultural and other circumstances relevant to their capacity to learn, adds to the oppression they are already experiencing in their lives. When these students have parents who are underemployed or who have difficulties finding employment, despite their qualifications and skills, and who experience several bouts of unemployment, seeing teachers and administrators from their own race and colour can help them have the will to succeed and can give them hope in their ability to do so.

By contrast, the messages that can be communicated to students by the absence of racialized teachers are that they also will not succeed and cannot be in positions of authority, because racialized people do not succeed. These students, not surprisingly, often question why they should invest time and energy learning when they have no hope of success. Many end up feeling that they may as well leave school and make a living however they can.

It is not only the racialized students whose attitudes are shaped negatively by the lack of a representative teaching force. In her 1992 report on human rights reform, Mary Cornish, a labour and human rights lawyer, made the following observation:

> Students learn by what they see happening more than what they are told is supposed to happen. When people of colour... are not seen in a fair and representative way at every level in the education system, students pick up on prejudice and stereotypes against those groups, which they then carry with them as they start on the rest of their lives (Cornish, Miles, Ormidvar, 1992: 179)

Criminalization

We noted above the reality that expulsions and suspensions put many youth on the streets for extended periods and lead to more interactions with the police, increasing the potential for criminalization. At the same time, the zero-tolerance policies have led many schools to call in the police for activities that would have been addressed by schools in earlier times. This has also led to the increased criminalization of many marginalized youth. Later in this chapter, we discuss the obvious negative impacts of criminalization on youth and note the issue here only because the contribution of the education system can be significant and must be addressed in reforms to that system.

Conclusion

It is with real regret that we draw the conclusion that aspects of the education system can be a root of the immediate risk factors for violence involving youth. We recognize the Premier's strong commitment to education and the major investments his government has made to advance it. We also recognize the Province's initiatives earlier this year to address some of the most egregious aspects of the safe schools provisions.

But the messages that we heard and convey here have a lengthy history, with very little having been done to address them. As the reports we cite in Chapter 6 help demonstrate, the representativeness of the teaching force and the curriculum were already old issues when Stephen Lewis addressed them in 1992. Three parties have held power in Ontario since the Lewis Report so eloquently rearticulated these issues, and none has successfully addressed them. Indeed, the addition and maintenance of the safe schools provisions went in the opposite direction, making things worse for many of the youth Stephen Lewis was concerned about by furthering the disadvantages already being felt by them.

5. Family Issues as Roots of the Immediate Risk Factors

We know intuitively that strong families are a strong foundation for youth. Within a strong family, youth can learn how to establish and maintain healthy relationships and understand what constitutes appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. A strong family provides youth with necessities, such as food, shelter, health care and education. The nurturing environment of a strong family also gives youth the security and emotional support they need.

Not every young person has such a family. Families can be divided, abusive, or struggling emotionally or financially. Some youth have no family. Without the support of a strong family, alienation, low self-esteem, a lack of hope or empathy, and other immediate risk factors for involvement with violence can set in and take hold of a young person, especially if the youth is also experiencing other roots of the immediate risk factors, such as poverty, racism or mental illness.

The understanding of what a "family" is warrants some discussion. For many, family still means a nuclear family, a household consisting of a man and a woman, married to each other, and their children. This has been the traditional family model on which many of our social policies, programs and overall structures have been based. The reality for many is and has been quite different and it continues to change.

According to Statistics Canada, the number of married couples with children living at home is decreasing, representing only 41.5 per cent of all families in Canada in 2001 compared with 55 per cent in 1981. Common-law couples with children accounted for 6.3 per cent of families in 2001, increasing from 1.9 per cent in 1981. Single-parent families with children at home are also increasing, accounting for 15.7 per cent of families in 2001, up from 11.3 per cent in 1981. Step-families represented nearly 12 per cent of all families with children in 2001, compared with 10 per cent in 1995 (Statistics Canada, 2002).

Statistics alone cannot capture the complexity of the changes in the Canadian family. For example, according to Canadian historian Chad Gaffield, "[i]n 1901, there was roughly the same portion of single-parent families as there was in 1996" (CBC News, June 14, 2002). The prevailing reasons for single parenthood, however, have changed dramatically. In the early part of the 20th century, the main reason for single parenthood was the death of a spouse. Now, most single parents are divorced or separated or have never married. At the same time, Canadian demographics have changed, and immigrants continue to bring with them greater reliance on and connection with the extended family, a matriarchal tradition, a hyper-patriarchal family structure, or more community-oriented child-rearing.

As the portrait of the Canadian family continues to change, social programs, policies and structures, largely based on the nuclear family model, are failing to serve a growing number of families. In this section, we identify some of the family circumstances that can be the roots of immediate risk factors for violence involving youth.

Single-Parent Families

Many parents are single owing to family breakdown, which, when accompanied by other stresses such as poverty, substance abuse or mental illness, can leave youth unsupported and vulnerable, increasing the risk of their involvement in violence.

Many single parents cope with the daunting task of raising children alone very well, but many need additional support to do so, especially if they are dealing with the additional stresses listed above. When those supports are provided, children can be raised with hope and bright expectations. When those supports are not provided, children can become alienated and lose hope for their future. In the end, it is not the structure of the family but rather the stresses bearing on the family relationships that can create immediate risk factors for violence involving youth.

Absent Fathers

The vast majority of single parents in Canada are women, and there has been much speculation about the propensity of youth from lone-parent homes led by women to be involved in violence. Although the research and literature points to a strong correlation between violence involving youth and teenage parents, the findings are equivocal on the correlation between violence involving youth and the absence of a father generally.

Despite the lack of solid evidence, an increased presence of fathers, and particularly Black fathers, is often cited as a force that would keep young Black men away from the arena of violence. Yet the experts and individuals we consulted in the course of this review, regardless of their faith, race or sex, expressed the belief that nurturing, encouragement in school, recognition, attention to mental health, respect, opportunity, good housing and sufficient positive reinforcement of race, faith and culture are the crucial factors in a youth's life. Where a father is present, what is important to the outcome is the degree of responsibility the father assumes for child-rearing and his participation in imparting positive values.

A number of studies have addressed the question of Black men and their parenting roles and responsibilities. Some have pointed to the residual effects of slavery, which deliberately shattered family relationships, forcing many Black men and women to risk their lives to hold onto any connection to their families. Others have looked at post-slavery discrimination and its effect on Black families and the role of men within those families. An example of this is immigration policies that permitted women to come to Canada as "domestics," but not to bring the fathers of their children. Studies have also examined the strong leadership role of women in Black families.

During this review, we heard a great deal about the current barriers Black men face, including barriers related to the education system, the criminal justice system, and the job market and professional career paths, all of which can inhibit their capacity to be responsible parents and to convey positive values to their children, whether or not they are present in the home. As we write this report, Barack Obama is the Democratic party's candidate for president of the United States. Senator Obama, whose own father was not present in the home, has called for Black men to take more responsibility for their children. Commentators have noted that he is thereby tackling an issue that a white person could not broach for fear of being labelled a racist. Significantly, however, Senator Obama's platform concentrates on healthy families, whatever their structure: supports for first-time mothers, nurse-family partnerships focusing on prenatal care, counselling, nurturing children, school readiness through head-start programs, getting people into the workforce, improving the child-support system and reducing recidivism by ensuring that offenders get appropriate help to enter the job market on release.

We agree with that approach. While it is logical to work to have fathers be responsible parents, we cannot conclude that their absence from the home is, on its own, a source of the immediate risk factors for violence involving youth. Investment in under-served communities, families, education, housing and alleviating urban poverty addresses the factors that have often been overlooked in the discourse about Black fathers and parental responsibility.

Teenage Parents

The issue of teenage parenting was raised several times during our consultations and research. Although most children born to teenagers do not become involved with violence, the issue is a troubling one for many observers.

Studies point to poverty and social exclusion as factors likely to result in teenage pregnancy. Specifically, teenagers are most likely to be become pregnant if they experience one or more of the following conditions: they are in care or have left care, they are underperforming in school and are truants, they have been excluded from school, they suffer from poor mental health, they have low aspirations because of socio-economic status and race, they are children of teenage mothers, they are homeless or they see having children as their only option in life.

Although pregnancy and parenthood can be well managed by some teens, pregnant teenagers are subject to a higher degree of medical risk than are women who become pregnant at a later age. They are more likely to receive inadequate nutrition while pregnant, which can affect the health of both mother and child. The incidence of pregnancy complications and maternal mortality is higher in teenagers. The infant mortality rate related to teenage mothers is also higher. Teenage mothers are more likely to experience episodes of depression, and teenage parents face additional challenges, before and after the birth of the child. They may be unable to complete their education, have low-paying and limited employment options, rely on social benefits for longer periods, and live in poor housing conditions during and after the pregnancy. If these factors are present, their children will likely be raised in poverty, perpetuating the cycle of curtailed opportunity that is an immediate risk factor for violence involving youth.

Immigrant and Refugee Families

As we discuss in more detail in Section 9 of this chapter, youth from immigrant or refugee families are often the most vulnerable to the conditions that can give rise to the immediate risk factors for violence involving youth, including racism and poverty. Recent immigrant and refugee parents who have to deal with urgent settlement problems may not be able to turn their attention to difficulties their children are having in school, or they may be unable to help because they cannot communicate with the teachers or are reticent to engage with authority figures. Schools often lack the capacity to help them to adjust or the creative outreach that would make them feel welcome.

Immigrant youth who adjust well to their new life and home often have strong family and community support that helps them cope, but others find it difficult to adjust to Canadian culture while also maintaining links to their families' cultures and social networks. This can create tension in the family and diminish the support that those youth actually receive, or are willing to receive, from their families. An immigrant youth can thus feel equally alienated at school and at home.

Violence and Substance Abuse in the Family

Living in a family in which verbal, physical or substance abuse is commonplace is frightening and devastating. Youth in this situation lack the support and sense of security that should be present in the home. They can experience mental and physical health problems, suffer violence at the hands of family members, or be subject to all three.

A severely troubled home life can have a damaging effect on a youth's interest in school, ability to learn and interactions with peers and teachers. Doing poorly at school as a consequence compounds the problem. The youth can feel increasingly alienated, and alienation is one of the immediate risk factors for violence involving youth. In turn, alienation can lead a youth to emulate the abusive and often violent patterns learned at home.

Low-Income Families

Families struggling with poverty face many challenges in maintaining a strong family unit. Parents may have limited time to spend with their children because they work at several jobs. Children may not be able to participate in fee-based recreational activities or after-school programs that would help them grow and thrive. Sometimes, family disputes about money can lead to physical or verbal violence. These are only a few examples of ways in which living in poverty or in a low-income family, by itself, can weaken the family unit. We have already discussed how poverty can create the conditions that give rise to the immediate risk factors for violence involving youth. When racism, education difficulties, immigration settlement issues or mental illness or family stresses from poverty itself are added, these risk factors can even more easily be created.

Absent Families

Some young people grow up without any family at all. Some live in foster care or group homes throughout their youth and others are homeless and live on the street. Youth in foster care who are transferred from home to home never know what it is like to belong to a family. The lack of a sense of belonging or a feeling of security can cause them to feel alienated and to have no sense of hope or opportunity. Youth who live on the street are often the victims of violence, and the harsh reality of street living can lead to these and other immediate risk factors for violence.

For those youth who live in care, there is sometimes a break in social services after they turn 16. Under the *Child and Family Services Act* of Ontario, a young person can leave protection or care when they are 16 years old, even though under Ontario's *Education Act*, a youth must stay in school until they are 18 years old. It is often difficult for service providers to reach those youth who leave care.

Youth in protection and care face significant challenges while transitioning from state care to independence and adulthood even when they stay in care until they turn 18. According to a report by the Laidlaw Foundation, *Youth Leaving Care – How Do They Fare?*, many youth in care have experienced considerable physical and emotional trauma, yet are required to function independently, with little support, once they reach age 18. Compared to their peers, youth coming out of care are more likely to:

- Leave school before completing their secondary education
- Become a parent at a young age
- Be dependent on social assistance
- Be unemployed or underemployed
- Be incarcerated/involved with the criminal justice system
- Experience homelessness
- Have mental health problems, and
- Be at higher risk for substance-abuse problems (Laidlaw Foundation, 2005: 3).

The analysis in the rest of this chapter makes the links between these sad realities and the roots of violence involving youth obvious.

"Crossover" Children and Youth

Children and youth in the child protection system often "cross over" to other systems, such as the criminal justice system. Based on our consultations, particularly with people working with children and youth, the fate of "crossover kids" is a concern that has not received sufficient attention. In the report *Crossover Kids: Care to Custody*, the Office of Child and Family Service Advocacy's Chief Advocate, Judy Finlay, pointed out that "a disproportionate number of youth in the young offender system have been in the care of child welfare authorities in Ontario." She saw a "trajectory from the children's service sector to the young offender system" (Finlay, 2003: 1).

Finlay cited a study showing that children and youth who have been removed from their homes and placed in a group home have significantly more behavioural problems than those who are placed in foster care (Hukkanen et al., 1996, cited in Finlay, 2003: 3). Foster care is often the preferred option, but it is harder to place youth, particularly those who are older or who may have a record.

Placement in a group home is always a very difficult transition. It is particularly difficult for children or youth from dysfunctional families, for young people from ethnic and cultural minorities and for those with multiple problems. Some group homes have zero-tolerance policies requiring that the police be called in all cases of violence, many of which would be dealt with otherwise had they occurred in a family setting. Children or youth who are charged and enter the criminal justice system as a result can leave the child protection and welfare system with records as young offenders. Paradoxically, a young person's "last chance for rehabilitation" is often the criminal justice system, which is ill-equipped to deal with the youth's mental health problems (Finlay, 2003: 1).

Finlay also cites a study that found that youth in the young offender system have had multiple placements in the children's residential care system and have also been moved frequently within young offender services (Snow & Finlay, 1998, cited in Finlay, 2003: 4). Being moved around makes it difficult for them to get help, stay in school, hold a job, develop a sense of belonging or build trusting relationships with people who care about them. It also increases the chances that they will be drawn into the criminal justice system. According to Finlay, "[T]he literature confirms … that numerous out of home placements typically precede a youth's incarceration" (Finlay, 2003: 4).

Crossover children and youth may have mental and physical health problems, learning disabilities and unmet needs related to their culture. They may be experiencing racism, discrimination and poverty. Family, youth and justice services and institutions in Ontario are fragmented and, largely due to privacy issues, they are not coordinated to address the complex needs of these children and youth holistically (Snow and Finlay, 1998). Those who have little or no family support and cannot navigate their way through the justice or care systems themselves often fall through the cracks. Their problems multiply, setting them on a harmful course.

6. Health Issues as Roots of the Immediate Risk Factors

Health affects our daily lives in countless ways. Good health makes it easier to be a positive and productive person. Poor health can produce the opposite results, particularly if it is chronic. Health also plays a role in the development of the immediate risk factors for violence involving youth. Certain health issues are closely linked to some of the other roots that we have already discussed, rather than being roots themselves. Examples include nutritional deficits, physical inactivity, obesity or eating disorders, which have links to other roots such as poverty and urban design. Other health issues, such as mental health and substance abuse, can be viewed as direct roots of the immediate risk factors for violence involving youth, particularly alienation and no sense of belonging.

Mental Health

Mental health is an often-overlooked, but very significant, issue for youth. Of course, the majority of young people who experience mental health issues are not involved in violence. But as we heard from the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, the mental health of some young people, if not addressed, can lead to the immediate risk factors for violence involving youth. A literature review commissioned by the Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services for submission to this review confirms this general view: "In the age group committing the most violent incidents, individuals with mental disorders account for a considerable amount of violence in the community" (Arsenault et al., 2000, cited in Leschied, 2007: 24). Retrospective studies have shown that more youth with mental health disorders are arrested for violent offences than are youth who do not meet the diagnostic criteria for mental disorder (Leschied, 2007: 25).

The kinds of mental health issues that children and youth experience cover a broad spectrum. At the milder end of this spectrum are mental distresses that can result from, for example, school performance anxiety and bullying. Other children suffer more serious mental disorders, such as attention deficit hyper-activity disorder or psychiatric illnesses such as schizophrenia or bipolar disorder. Some children may suffer post-traumatic stress as a result of witnessing violence in their homes, communities or schools.

The symptoms of these various mental distresses, disorders or illnesses vary among individual young people, depending on such factors as personality, family life, socio-economic situations and access to treatment. Sometimes, the mental health symptoms experienced by youth can include characteristics consistent with the immediate risk factors for violence involving youth, including feelings of alienation, impulsivity, hopelessness and low self-esteem.

The high rates of mental health problems among young people concern us greatly. It has been estimated that, across cultures, one in five of Ontario's children and youth experience a mental health or behavioural disorder requiring intervention (Offord et al., 1989, cited in Leschied, 2007: 23). According to the *Reaching for the Top* report by the federal Advisor on Healthy Children and Youth, 80 per cent of all psychiatric disorders emerge in adolescence, and psychiatric disorder is the single most common illness that begins in this age group. However, only one in five young people who need mental health services receives them (Leitch, 2007: 5).

The mental health system is overburdened (Standing Senate Committee, 2006: 142). The result is that many young people experiencing mental health problems do not receive mental heath services or support. This lack of treatment has several impacts relevant to the immediate risk factors. First, it allows the mental health condition to worsen and its effects on the youth (and their alienation and low self-esteem) to grow. Second, it adds pressure and stress to the families of these youth. And third, it can lead to the youth disrupting the lives of classmates, friends and peers.

As in so many other areas, early intervention has been identified as critical. Of particular concern to us is that preschool and younger school-aged children who suffer from mental illness be given a higher priority than at present. Preschool years pose two challenges: (i) identification of mental health problems and delivery of services, and (ii) effective transition to school or higher grades (Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, 2006: 137). *Crosscurrents* (a publication of the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health) devoted an issue to the importance of early treatment for at-risk youth in improving outcomes (*Crosscurrents,* Winter 2007/08*).* This view is echoed in *Reaching for the Top*:

> It is estimated that 70% of childhood cases of mental health problems can be solved through early diagnosis and interventions.
>
> Early interventions can help these children and youth to lead normal, productive, healthy lives and save the costs that would otherwise be incurred by providing them with social services throughout their adult lives (Leitch, 2007: 130).

Other challenges exist in attempting to properly address the mental health problems faced by young people. Mental health services are often provided in hospitals or large institutions, which some youth are not comfortable accessing and which others may not be able to access for reasons such as a lack of money or because their parents cannot take time from work to attend. There is often a stigma associated with mental health issues, which may make both parents and youth reluctant to seek mental health services or accept treatment even where it is offered. This stigma may be particularly acute for families or youth already facing discrimination because of race, income level, or cultural or ethnic origins. Mental health services may be cut off for older youth when they turn a certain age, often 16 or 18, even though "there is no end date for mental illness" (Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology, 2006: 144).

Substance Abuse

Illegal substance and alcohol use, particularly where the use is heavy and consistent and linked with mental health issues, can readily lead to the immediate risk factors. Also linked with substance abuse are other factors that can contribute to childhood and youth problems, such as poverty, social disadvantage, poor academic achievement and weak family units. Substance abuse is so imbedded in social and academic life that "[i]f schools and communities are concerned about improving achievement, they must address both attitudes and behaviours related to substance use and violence" (Mandell et al., cited in Leschied, 2007: 29).

7. Lack of Economic Opportunity for Youth as a Root of the Immediate Risk Factors

In earlier sections of this chapter we explored the ways in which poverty, especially concentrations of poverty, and issues of racism, community infrastructure and barriers to education can curtail economic opportunities for youth. That analysis is consistent with the views of youth themselves, as expressed in the Grassroots Youth Collaborative (GYC) Report:

> It is impossible to discuss economics and opportunity without highlighting the effect the lack of education has on getting a job, the near impossibility to gain sustainable employment with a criminal record, and how a lack of community space to run youth programming impedes organizations from providing critical life and social skills to marginalized youth (Volume 3: 129).

These factors all affect both the actual and the perceived ability of some youth to advance economically, and thus can lead to the immediate risk factors for violence involving youth. To again cite the GYC Report:

> Although there is certainly violence that occurs outside of economic hardship, there is a general sense that, if provided with viable and accessible pathways to meaningful economic self-sufficiency, many young people would not be forced into situations

> that put them at a higher risk of violence. There is a myriad of issues that surround economics, including *meaningful* employment, self-determination, career options, glass ceilings, discrimination in the workforce, and overall access (Volume 3: 129).

The lack of opportunities for many families and communities has left many youth with a limited view of the role of adulthood. Many youth share a sense of shame and frustration because they cannot take care of themselves or their families. For many of them, the inability to get ahead is not the result of lack of effort, but the lack of the opportunity to create their own destinies. Often, job searches are an endless journey into the unknown; often, they are rife with discrimination based on race or postal code. Some youth are discouraged from even starting these searches by their experiences or those of their friends or family, or because they have been conditioned by their surroundings to believe that they have little of worth to offer. Still others must choose between bus fare to get to an interview or being able to afford dinner.

It is difficult to fully understand the lack of employment opportunity without examining our society's norms and values. We live in a society that places an enormous emphasis on the importance of money and material possessions. This leads some youth to feel that they are not valued because they do not have money or many of the most desirable possessions. This creates a dilemma for many youth: the need to feel valued without the means to acquire that which is valuable to them and society as a whole.

This, in turn, accentuates the sense of isolation, alienation and lack of empathy or belonging that they may already have because of the many clear messages of "otherness" and exclusion, which we have already discussed.

Some youth then feel forced to find alternatives. Systematic exclusion from stable employment forces youth and their families into insecure and dead-end jobs that do not pay enough to purchase the goods and services that provide an adequate standard of living. Some youth feel that they are doubly victimized: first, by the enormous barriers they face in order to participate in the Canadian marketplace and, second, because they are told it is their fault for not achieving.

For some, this may lead directly to economic crime, whether for clothing, electronics or other material goods, or, as we were frequently told, to provide food for their families at the end of the month. For others, it leads to a lack of hope for a better quality of life for themselves and their families, as the success they desire is seen to be out of reach for reasons beyond their control.

For these and other reasons, a lack of meaningful economic opportunity can lead to the immediate risk factors for violence, including alienation, low self-esteem, impulsivity and lack of hope. Indeed, it is easy to understand how it can be challenging for a person who is forced into a position of diminishing self-worth to value their own lives and the lives of others.

8. Denial of the Youth Voice as a Root of the Immediate Risk Factors

As we were told, "If you don't have ways for the youth to plug into the community, they will pull out."

The sense that many youth already have of being alienated from society is reinforced when they do not have opportunities to be heard in areas that directly and immediately affect their lives. The impacts and expressions of the resulting alienation vary by geography, class and ethnicity, but in many cases the impact is strong. The results can be a negative concept of self, a greater distrust of authority and, often, a sense of powerlessness in controlling their destiny and of exclusion from the broader community. This sense of powerlessness can be even more acute in youth who are female, immigrant or of colour and others whose self-esteem has been lowered by poverty, low expectations and exclusion.

Many youth are refusing to trust institutions that are unwilling to trust them. Many youth are opting out, and others feel pushed out of civil society due, in part, to limited opportunities for them to be involved in decisions about important aspects of their lives.

Indeed, there are few opportunities for youth to have a voice on boards, agencies and commissions. Few community organizations that serve youth have youth on their boards, and even fewer provide the supports that would help youth participate effectively as board members. With limited exceptions, such as the Toronto Youth Cabinet, which advises Toronto City Council, governments have few established mechanisms for including the youth voice in a sustained and meaningful way. Some organizations, such as the Laidlaw Foundation, do better, but they remain the exception.

As well, there is no provincial policy that promotes youth-led organizations as key partners in working with youth, developing them and providing services to them. This is despite the reality that many youth are best inspired and served by fellow youth, who understand them, and by the reality that youth-led organizations by definition bring the youth voice to the planning and service-delivery tables. The absence of youth-led organizations from many of our communities sends a powerful message of limited opportunity and excludes the youth perspective from many decisions.

The patent unfairness of being excluded from matters directly affecting them causes many youth to lose faith in the willingness or ability of organizations or governments to accomplish meaningful change. They can become cynical about the motives and sincerity of adults. As a result, Ontario's disturbing lack of a youth voice, particularly the voices of socially under-represented groups such as women, indigenous people and youth of colour, can lead to alienation, lack of self-esteem and lack of a sense of power or hope — the immediate risk factors for violence involving youth.

9. Immigration Settlement Issues as a Root of the Immediate Risk Factors

Canada and Ontario, in particular, are blessed by their many and diverse immigrant communities. People from around the world have chosen to make Canada their new home and have embraced their adopted homeland with affection, passion and energy. People immigrate here for a number of reasons, primarily because they want to succeed and because they want their children to succeed.

However, various circumstances relating to the settlement of immigrants can have significant negative impacts on immigrant parents and youth and how successful their new lives are. Unfortunately, some of these circumstances can give rise to the immediate risk factors we identified in Chapter 3 and can put youth into the path of violence, either directly or by compounding the other roots of violence, such as poverty and racism.

Immigrant Parents

Many immigrant parents face significant hurdles in settling themselves and their families into the Canadian social and economic fabric. Obtaining meaningful employment is often the biggest hurdle. Recent immigrants are often more highly educated than other Canadians, yet they experience double the unemployment rates. Factors for this higher level of unemployment include employers requiring Canadian work experience and the reluctance of many employers to accept international accreditation as equivalent to Canadian accreditation. The recent appointment of a Fairness Commissioner to assist with entry to Ontario's regulated professions is a positive step, but a similar approach to the trades is urgently needed to counter the many frustrating and alienating impacts of exclusion from those fields.

Countless highly trained and experienced immigrants are working outside their area of expertise and interest, or not at all, trapped in the catch-22 of being unable to obtain that first Canadian job that would lead to the Canadian experience so often cited as a prerequisite for employment. This reality can eat away at the self-esteem and confidence of many immigrants and cause them to feel marginalized and undervalued in their new society. These feelings easily rub off on other members of their families, including the youth, who may also come to feel marginalized, undervalued and isolated in their new society as a result of their parents' inability to find meaningful, or any, employment. As well, exhortations to succeed in school may sound trite when they come from parents whose own educational accomplishments seem to count for so little.

This employment reality can also have other significant negative impacts on the settlement experience of immigrant families. Immigrants are more likely to live in poverty. The poverty rate for recent immigrants is twice that of other Canadian families. The Canadian Council on Social Development says that the poverty rate of recent immigrants is 27 per cent compared to 13 per cent for other Canadian families. Poor immigrants face all the attendant consequences of poverty, including the heightened possibility for violence involving youth that we discussed in Section 1 of this chapter dealing with poverty as a root of the immediate risks factors for such violence.

Government settlement programs that are intended to help newcomers integrate into Canadian society are not always able to assist immigrant families sufficiently. Strong immigrant families may be weakened if their transition to Canadian society is difficult. Even where good settlement services are available, some immigrant parents face language or other barriers to connecting with schools or social services, such as recreation and health programs, which could support them in their efforts to settle their children. These barriers may also make it difficult for an immigrant parent to intervene on behalf of a child where there are learning or behavioural issues at school or in the community. The result may be that immigrant parents are not viewed within their own families as having sufficient authority or knowledge to successfully head the family, and another root of the immediate risk factors for violence involving youth — a weakened family unit — may emerge.

Immigrant Youth

In addition to the social and economic impacts that immigrant youth experience along with their parents, they face their own challenges independent of their parents. Their families' values and ways may conflict with the norms they encounter in their new schools and among their new peer groups, placing additional pressure on them. The new parenting and teaching methods they encounter in Canada can be unfamiliar for both them and their parents. Language and other barriers faced by immigrant parents can sometimes mean that immigrant youth are left to fend for themselves within their schools, as well as the larger outside communities.

Additionally, immigrant youth may be expected to shoulder major household responsibilities, such as taking care of younger siblings or working long hours at part-time jobs to help ease some of the family's financial pressures. They may also have to serve as guides and translators for their parents and other older family members in dealings outside the home, assuming a role sometimes beyond their age.

There are few immigrant settlement services for youth. The lack of an established network of immigrant youth settlement services can compound the loneliness and isolation that many immigrant youth may already feel as a result of their parents' struggles to adapt to their new home. Many of the existing settlement services are intended for adults, with supports for immigrant youth simply being "add-ons" to the adult services. Many immigrant youth find that the settlement programs and services that do exist are overly bureaucratic and not easily accessible to them.

The breadth of service is also an issue. Many immigrant youth need more assistance to understand and succeed in the Ontario school system, particularly since their parents are often unfamiliar with it and unsure about how to access school services and staff to get help for their children. There are many recreation and cultural programs in Ontario directed at youth, but often immigrant youth lack the settlement services that could connect them to these programs. Similarly, innovative immigrant youth settlement services that could help them get to know their city and its main institutions and facilities are lacking.

Overall, the social and economic isolation and frustration some immigrants feel as they attempt to settle into life in Ontario often reverberate in their children's lives. These and the circumstances encountered directly by immigrant youth can all foster a deep sense of alienation, as well as a sense of being unfairly treated, of low self-esteem, of not belonging and of not being heard — all immediate risk factors for violence involving youth.

10. The Justice System as a Root of the Immediate Risk Factors

Our justice system works hard to respond to violence involving youth. Regrettably, that system allows some individuals to do so in a way that can create or reinforce some of the conditions we have identified as the immediate risk factors for such violence.

In saying this, we do not want to diminish the efforts of the talented and dedicated individuals working within the justice system, often in difficult and sometimes-dangerous circumstances, for a safer society. Obviously, contributing to the roots of violence involving youth is the last thing they would want.

The potential for this outcome arises in two main ways: the needlessly aggressive and belittling ways in which some youth are treated by those working in the justice system and the consequences for any youth of being drawn into that system. We believe that the first of these must and can be stopped immediately. The second — criminalization — is more complex, since in many cases the consequences it produces are a necessary cost of dealing with a dangerous individual or very serious offence. In other instances, however, it needlessly exacts a very high price from society by fostering rather than deterring future serious crime.

The Impact of How Youth Are Treated

Overly aggressive, belittling, discriminatory and other inappropriate conduct towards youth is an issue that permeated our discussions. It has been the subject of numerous previous reports. It is one of the most pressing issues put forward by youth, and it is a cause of concern to all who are trying to contain and prevent violence, including most senior police officers in this province and elsewhere, as well as government officials with whom we met. And yet it persists.

Although most frequently raised in relation to front-line police officers, the issue is by no means restricted to them. It extends into the courtrooms and correctional facilities. It is apparent to us, as it has been to so many before us, that individuals at many levels within our justice system believe that aggressive suppression and control by physical dominance, and sometimes by demeaning treatment, will limit crime or "teach youth a lesson." The sad reality is that if police stops or interventions are done discriminatorily or aggressively or in a degrading manner, or if youth are belittled in court or harassed while in custody, a deep sense of grievance and frustration can result. Where it does, a youth's self-esteem and sense of belonging or hope are undercut. Alienation and a sense of unfairness and oppression can easily follow.

Police conduct in particular matters a great deal because of the large number of youth it affects, including many who will have no other involvement with the justice system. When we have youth who already feel their chances in life are limited by their colour or by where they live, or both, and when these same youth have little to do and few mentors and role models, police targeting and overly aggressive behaviour can drive their spirit into the ground. Some react on the spot and get into deeper trouble; others seethe until they boil over for reasons even they cannot always articulate, [illegible] yet others retreat into shells, which permanently mar their prospects.

There is a serious disconnect here with the action needed to address the roots of violence involving youth. Not only do overly aggressive police practices nurture the roots of the immediate risk factors, but also they can quickly undercut major investments in other areas that may well have kept a youth on the path to a productive future. Whatever progress we make in education, in building self-esteem and respect through mentoring or civic engagement, or in creating hope, opportunity and confidence through sports or the arts can be undone by aggressive and humiliating interactions that indicate to youth that they are inferior.

This not only leads to heightened risks for criminal behaviour, but also builds sympathy in the community for those targeted by the police. It makes the community reluctant to trust the police and engage with them to address gang and crime issues.

One officer's small win in a mano-a-mano encounter with a youth can all too easily produce one large step backwards for policing in a whole community.

Not surprisingly, the resulting alienation from the police also produces a lack of desire to cooperate with the police when a crime occurs. Sometimes this is because, as we were told, the community feels that coming forward to volunteer information leads to the person being treated as suspicious by the police. Other times, the lack of any positive relationship with the police gives rise to a fear that they will not respect a confidence and will quickly betray it to gain some other advantage. Yet other times, it is because of a strong sense that the police cannot or will not protect them if gang members suspect them of offering information. Tragically, this can start at an early age, as youth routinely repeat the mantra that "snitches get stitches," at least in part because they have been given no reason by the police to consider an alternative mantra that encourages cooperation with the police: "silence brings violence."

While senior police officers lament the policing problems caused by these poor relationships in some communities, the long-term consequences fall more on the community than on the police. The absence of cooperation with the police facilitates crime and creates havens for it in the very communities whose prospects are most damaged by its presence.

The seriousness of this situation needs to be noted. Senior police officers in this province and elsewhere have told us of how negative incidents on the front lines can undo months of positive work by other police officers to put or keep youth on the path to a positive future or to build trust with a community. This negative potential is magnified when a stop or intervention is seen as being the result of racial profiling. How can youth of colour see a positive and productive future in a society in which they and their friends, and sometimes their parents as well, are routinely, and often aggressively, stopped and questioned just because of the colour of their skin? This is not a minor inconvenience — it is a life lesson that race matters, and that it can and will count against some members of our community.

This lesson, and its consequences, are driven home when youth are not only singled out for police attention because of their colour, but, as well, are subjected to racist comments in that interaction and when they end up being incarcerated. *Racism Behind Bars: The Treatment of Black and Other Racial Minority Prisoners in Ontario Prisons* (Cole and Gittens, 1995) set out in some detail the discriminatory treatment faced by African-Canadian inmates, including youth, and recent concerns about racism among corrections staff themselves give us cause to wonder whether this situation is a whole lot better today.

Even within our courtrooms, youth are not free from mistreatment. Graduate students in criminology acting as court observers in Toronto on unrelated matters have conveyed to us their deep dismay at seeing judicial officers, court staff and security officers upbraid youth in a demeaning way for their appearance, dress or conduct. After observing these matters on a daily basis for more than a year, they concluded that this was done in a racially discriminatory way, and that youth — and their parents — from minority groups took the brunt of this behaviour.

We fully understand that it may be the youth who is being provocative. But it is the adult who is being paid to discharge a public function for a public goal. That goal is to minimize the chances of the youth reoffending and maximize the chances that their experience in the justice system will have some positive impact on their life. To achieve that goal, youth must be treated with respect and dignity; they cannot be expected to respect a system that does not respect them.

To avoid being misunderstood, we note that, as we emphasize in Chapter 9, we are not saying that youth should not be stopped and charged, or not required to follow basic conduct norms in the courts or not incarcerated. We accept that consequences sometimes may have to be harsh, but firmly believe that the route to them never should be. Actors in the justice system must play the adult role; even when provoked, they must model the civility and respect they want the youth to show in future. They must be strategic and must think about whether their approach to a youth today will support or suppress the conditions that produce the roots of violent crime involving youth tomorrow.

Needless Criminalization

When we come to the issue of criminalization, we want to be very clear that we are not saying that the criminal justice process should be abrogated for youth. Just the contrary: we believe that it can and does play an important role in protecting society. The issue for us is how to make the most strategic use of this costly (in many senses of the word) resource so that its positive impacts are not outweighed by its negative ones. As we make clear in Chapter 9, our call is for a far more strategic approach to criminalization.

The criminalization of youth is a concern in our context because of the way it can lead to alienation, a lack of self-esteem and hope, and other immediate risk factors. At the most basic level, the decision to seek a criminal sanction for an act committed by a youth can lead to that youth seeing himself or herself, and being seen by others, as different, risky or as someone who does not belong in mainstream society. It immediately creates a sense of being different from those considered to be law-abiding and a sense of identification with those already involved in crime. Those labelling and stigmatizing consequences have long been documented by researchers.

Even without a conviction, there are consequences. Youth who are charged with a criminal offence necessarily miss school while attending court. This can cause the loss of several days of school even before the matter goes to trial or is resolved, given how slow the youth justice system is. And, while in the courthouse, often for an entire day just waiting for a routine appearance, their natural peers are other youth charged with crime, rather than the youth who are in school.

These risks are made worse when, as is often the case, youth court proceedings take place in the same buildings as adult criminal matters. There are good reasons to be concerned about the impact of youth mixing freely in and around the court buildings with adults accused of crimes who may be all too willing to use the opportunity for gang recruitment.

As well, the fact of facing a charge can lead to suspension or expulsion from school, or to bail conditions that have serious impacts on schooling or even access to recreational and other programs, which would keep the youth in contact with positive peers and role models. All of these consequences again encourage contact with other youth in conflict with the law.

If the youth is convicted, a criminal record has an enormous impact on their ability to get a job, whether to support himself or herself or to support higher education. This is particularly true when the record is attached to someone whose race or place of residence already puts them at a disadvantage. And, of course, youth know this, as do their peers, families and teachers. The narrowed horizon that results from involvement in the criminal justice system, whether felt by youth or by those advising them, or both, becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy and promotes the very feelings of alienation and lack of empathy or hope that we are most concerned about.

For these reasons, the diminished sense of self-worth and reduced hope not being the least among them, it is apparent to us that the decision to criminalize youth should be a strategic one, taken in full consideration of all of the downstream consequences. Where the balance is in favour of the charge, those consequences must be accepted, and every effort must be made while the youth is in the system to minimize them by the way the youth is treated and by the programs they receive.

But criminalization should not be the default option, chosen because it is the easiest route to take in a given case or because alternatives are not readily available. The consequences are too serious for that: serious for the youth, their family and community, and serious for society, including the potential future victims of an alienated and isolated youth with a low stake in our society.

Conclusion

We conclude this section by simply repeating that we respect and value the role of the criminal justice system in the protection of society and appreciate the challenges and often risks faced by those working within it. At the same time, we are deeply concerned that the way some youth are treated by and within the justice system, and the decision to bring them into it, can lead to the roots of the immediate risk factors for violence in our society. The lack of a coordinated system in Ontario that takes that potential consequence into account and weighs it in the balance when responses to youth conduct are considered, is troubling.

Chapter 5:

Violence in Ontario:

a Province at a Crossroads

Introduction

In this chapter, we outline what is known about the state of violence involving youth in Ontario, how violence is affecting youth, neighbourhoods and the province as a whole, and where we believe it is heading. For the reasons we set out in this discussion, we believe that Ontario is at a crossroads. One of the two main roads leading from that crossroads will, with strong leadership and sustained commitment, lead us towards an ever-safer society with increasing security and opportunity for all. The other will lead to an entrenched cycle of violence, which could plague this province and limit its potential for years to come.

How Violent Is Ontario?

Our review of violence involving youth in Ontario communities led us to pose two essential questions: How bad is violence in Ontario? And, have we started down a path to becoming an even more violent society, a trend that, perhaps, cannot be reversed?

Clearly, the public's perception is that violent crime is increasing: a majority of Ontario residents believe this to be the case. For example, the results of a 2007 general population survey suggest that over 70 per cent of Toronto residents believe that crime has increased significantly over the past 10 years.

We explore in this section how the reality compares to that perception and how the violence that is occurring affects certain of our communities and our society as a whole. Then, in subsequent sections, we outline what we believe the trends to be and why they give rise to the concern we expressed in the introduction above.

1. What Do Police Statistics Tell Us About Violence in Ontario?

There are two main ways to approach the question of the level of violence from a statistical perspective. The first relies upon levels of crime reported to or uncovered by the police. The second relies on levels of crime revealed to researchers by both victims and perpetrators. We discuss each in turn, drawing the statistics and much of the analysis from a very valuable paper by our research consultant, Prof. Scot Wortley. This paper, *A Province at the Crossroads: Statistics on Youth Violence in Ontario*, is found in Volume 4 for those who wish to better understand the methodologies and issues. We then complete this section with a brief overview of the important perspectives on violence brought to us by scholars working in the field of critical race studies.

Despite public perceptions, if we look at crime reported to the police the facts are clear: violent crime has actually decreased in this province during the past 20 years. Violent crime, as the term is used by the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, is a composite measure that includes homicide, attempted homicide, assaults, sexual assaults and robbery; crime rates are expressed as the number of reported incidents per 100,000 residents. From 1986 to 2006, violent crime dropped five per cent from 797 recorded occurrences per 100,000 Ontarians, to 756/100,000. The province's homicide rate, after peaking in 1975, dropped steadily and in 2006 was 40 per cent lower than in 1975. At 1.5/100,000, Ontario's homicide rate is only slightly above its 1961 level. Clearly, there is little evidence to suggest that the average Ontario resident is more at risk of experiencing violence than they were 30 or 40 years ago.

So how do we compare with other jurisdictions? Is Ontario more dangerous than other parts of Canada, or elsewhere in the world? Again, the answer is clearly no.

Ontario's rate of violent crime in 2006 (756/100,000) was tied with Quebec's as the second lowest in Canada. Only Prince Edward Island, at 714/100,000, was lower. By contrast, Saskatchewan's rate of violent crime at 2,039/100,000 and Manitoba's at 1,598/100,000 were both more than twice Ontario's rate.

Ontario's 2006 homicide rate (1.5/100,000) is the sixth lowest among Canada's provinces, still less than half the rate in Manitoba (3.3/100,000) and Saskatchewan (4.1/100,000). Rates for assault, sexual assault and robbery are also remarkably consistent with the homicide findings: in 2006, Ontario had the second lowest rate of physical assault and sexual assault, and the sixth lowest rate of robbery. In short, compared to other provinces, Ontario is a safe place to live for most of its residents.

Internationally, the facts are much the same, only more dramatic. In general, homicide rates are much higher in developing nations like South Africa (40.5/100,000), Brazil (53.3/100,000) or Jamaica (62.1/100,000) than in developed countries like Canada (1.8/100,000), which is still higher than Ontario's 1.5/100,000. Homicide rates are also high in Eastern Europe, particularly in those countries that were part of the Soviet Union. For example, the homicide rate in Russia (19.9/100,000) is approximately 13 times higher than Ontario's. The United States' rate (5.7/100,000) is four times greater than Ontario's, and Ontario fares equally well when compared to the individual states. In fact, only two of the 50 states, North Dakota and New Hampshire, appear to have homicide rates lower than Ontario's.

Another perception is that while the province as a whole is safe, its cities are not. The general population survey mentioned earlier revealed that 50 per cent of Toronto residents believe Toronto has more crime than other major cities in Canada. However, in a ranking of 20 large urban areas, only two Ontario cities make it into the top 10 of the most violent cities in Canada: Thunder Bay and Sudbury. Toronto, a city often stereotyped as violent, ranks 14th out of the 20 urban areas.

A similar picture emerges when comparing Ontario cities to their international counterparts. Detroit, for example, had the highest urban homicide rate (47.3/100,000) in the United States in 2006, 26 times the rates in Toronto and Ottawa, whose rate, while high for Ontario, was just at Canada's national average (1.8/100,000). Our researchers could not find one U.S. city with a population over 250,000 with a lower homicide rate than Toronto's or Ottawa's. When compared to selected European cities, Toronto and Ottawa still seem safe. Glasgow's homicide rate is 6.2/100,000, Amsterdam's is 4.4/100,000, London's is 2.6/100,000, and Copenhagen's is 2/100,000. On the other hand, Lisbon at 0.6/100,000, Vienna at 1.1/100,000 and Rome at 1.3/100,000 all show that Ontario cities could, perhaps, do better.

2. What Do Victimization Surveys Tell Us About Violence in Ontario?

What then do the victimization surveys and self-report surveys tell us about the rate of violence in Ontario? These kinds of surveys generally uncover much more criminal activity than the official police statistics. For example, Statistics Canada's 2004 General Social Survey produced an unofficial crime rate of approximately 28,000/100,000 residents. By contrast, the 2004 crime rate produced by official statistics was only 8,951/100,000. The huge discrepancy between these two rates of crime can be explained by the fact that most crimes are never reported to or discovered by the police and therefore are not recorded in official statistics. Indeed, according to the results of the 2004 General Social Survey, only one-third of all victimization incidents are reported to the police.

The same survey found that 28 per cent of the Canadian population 15 years of age or older had experienced at least one criminal victimization in the previous 12 months. The survey also found that eight per cent had experienced a physical assault in the past year, two per cent had experienced a sexual assault and one per cent had experienced a robbery. In sum, 10.6 per cent of the population had experienced one or more violent victimizations in the previous 12 months. This was down slightly from the rate of violent victimization recorded by the General Social Survey in 1999.

When the 2004 survey's violent victimization rates are compared by province, the data pattern in general is consistent with the official statistics discussed above. Overall, according to these surveys, violent crime appears to be more prevalent in both Western and Eastern Canada. Ontario, which ranks eighth lowest with respect to officially recorded violent crime, rises only to sixth lowest when estimates are based on general social survey data.

In terms of cities, both Toronto's and Hamilton's violent victimization rates are close to the national average. They are less violent than Western Canada and Nova Scotia, but somewhat more violent than Quebec.

Given the focus of our report, we also wanted to consider how violence reported by Ontario youth compared to that reported by youth in other provinces. Fortunately, the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY), a self-report survey conducted across Canada, provides data weighted to produce a representative sample of Canadian adolescents 12-17 years of age and allows this sort of comparison.

Cycle 4 of the NLSCY asked respondents whether they had engaged in any of nine serious violent activities over the past 12 months: an attack so severe that the victim required medical attention, assault with a weapon, carrying a knife, carrying a gun, carrying another weapon like a stick or a club, robbery, minor sexual assault (uninvited sexual touching), major sexual assault (forced someone to have sex against their will), and arson.

In response, 19.5 per cent of Ontarian youth surveyed reported that they had engaged in at least one seriously violent behaviour in the past 12 months. Ontario's rate is somewhat lower than those of the Atlantic region (20.0 per cent), Alberta (22.5 per cent) and Manitoba (26.4 per cent), and somewhat higher than the rates in Quebec (17.5 per cent), Saskatchewan (18.5 per cent) and British Columbia (17.7 per cent) (Sprott and Doob 2008, cited in Wortley).

To dig more deeply into the kinds of youth violence being experienced, our research consultant looked at nine other studies related to violence involving youth; all are listed in his research paper in Volume 4. While it is difficult to compare the results of these studies, it is possible to illustrate that various forms of violence are quite common in the lives of young people.

Bullying

Bullying, defined as a form of abuse at the hands of peers that represents a pattern of repeated aggression in which there is a power differential (Craig, Pepler and Blais, 2007, cited in Wortley), is the most common form of violence experienced by youth. According to a study that the World Health Organization (WHO) conducted in 2001-02, 40 per cent of Canadian students will have been bullied in the past few months (Craig and Harel, 2004, cited in Wortley).

Other studies have reached similar conclusions. For example, a recent Toronto District School Board Student Census (Yau and O'Reilly, 2007, cited in Wortley) not only confirms the prevalence of bullying, but as well illustrates its various forms. It also shows that bullying is more common in Toronto's middle schools than in high schools.

Percentage of students reporting that they were "sometimes" or "often" victims of bullying behaviour

Nature of bullying	Middle Schools	High Schools
Name calling, insults	41	31
Excluded from groups	21	16
Physically bullied by an individual at school	16	10
Physically bullied by a group or gang at school	10	7

Source: Yau and O'Reilly, 2007 (cited in Wortley); Toronto District School Board Student Census

The WHO survey also shed light on who is doing the bullying. While 36 per cent said they had bullied someone in the past few months, it seems boys, at 54 per cent, are much more likely to be bullies than are girls, at 32 per cent (Craig and Harel, 2004, cited in Wortley).

It may also be that those who bully, bully a lot. A 1997 survey of Canadians concluded that six per cent of children admitted to bullying others more than once or twice a week over a six-week period.

Physical Threats and Assaults

Based on Prof. Wortley's review of the research papers, physical threats and assaults also appear to be quite common and, not surprisingly, street youth are at greater risk than students.

Here are some numbers from the 2000 Toronto Youth Crime and Victimization Survey

Percentage of youth reporting physical threats or assaults, including those with a weapon

	At any time in their lives		Within past 12 months	
Incident	**High school**	**Street youth**	**High school**	**Street youth**
Physically threatened	67	85	39	76
… with a weapon	28	73	15	59
Physically assaulted	70	85	39	69
… with a weapon	16	59	7	44

Source: Tanner and Wortley, 2002, cited in Wortley); 2000 Toronto Youth Crime and Victimization Survey

Other studies offer some support for the fact that physical threats and assaults, with or without weapons, are frequent:

- A 1998 survey of Calgary high school students determined that 42 per cent had been threatened in the past year — a number very close to Toronto's 39 per cent.

- In addition to its findings on bullying noted above, the Toronto District School Board Student Census (Yau and O'Reilly, 2007, cited in Wortley) reported that 21 per cent of Toronto middle school students and 16 per cent of Toronto high school students are "sometimes" or "often" threatened with physical harm while at school.

- A 2007 study by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), in a survey of 1,800 Ontario high school students, found that 32 per cent of males and 16 per cent of females had been physically assaulted in the previous three months (Wolfe and Chiodo, 2008, cited in Wortley).

Robbery/Extortion

Robbery and extortion are much less common events, but a significant portion of Ontario youth will still experience them at some point.

Again relying on the 2000 Toronto Youth Crime and Victimization Survey, it appears that 13 per cent of Toronto high school students and 50 per cent of street youth had used force or the threat of force to rob someone, with eight per cent of students and 40 per cent of street youth saying they had done so within the past 12 months. Males are much more likely to engage in this behaviour; 20 per cent of male high school students reported they had done so at some point in their lives, compared to only six per cent of female students.

Weapons Use

The public has been justifiably concerned about the apparent upsurge in gun violence, although, as described earlier, homicide rates across Ontario have actually been falling for the past 30 years. However, as we will discuss later in this chapter, serious violence is becoming increasingly concentrated among poor, minority males, and far too often that violence involves gunplay. In Toronto, for example, guns have been used in half of all murders since 2000, up from 25 per cent during the 1970s.

Insofar as guns are involved in school violence, it is apparent that a very small, but still disturbing, percentage of students are implicated. A 2003 survey found that 10 per cent of respondents had carried a weapon, although the type was not specified (Paglia and Adalf, 2003, cited in Wortley). In 2005, however, the comparable study asked about gun-carrying. The results suggested that 2.2 per cent of Ontario high school students had carried a gun with them in the past two years (Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, 2006, cited in Wortley). These figures are quite similar to another Canadian study that found 28 per cent of Calgary high school students had carried a weapon to school, including three per cent who claimed to have carried a handgun (Paetsch and Bertrand, 1999, cited in Wortley).

A study in Toronto found that 40 per cent of high school students had carried a weapon with them outside of school, and 15 per cent had carried a weapon to school (Erickson and Butters, 2003, cited in Wortley). The same study found one per cent of respondents said they themselves had brought a gun to school. Three per cent of respondents said that they had threatened or tried to hurt someone with a gun, while seven per cent claimed to have been threatened or attacked by someone with a firearm.

Sexual Assault and Harassment

The pattern for sexual assault or harassment as uncovered by the Toronto Youth Crime and Victimization Survey (Tanner and Wortley, 2002, cited in Wortley) is much the same as for other violence, in particular with regard to discrepancies between high school students and street youth.

Percentage of youth reporting sexual assaults or sexual harassment

	At any time in their lives				**Within past 12 months**			
	High school		**Street youth**		**High school**		**Street youth**	
Incident	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**	**M**	**F**
Unwanted sexual touching	9	42			5	23		
Sexual assault	4	20	26	72	3	10	19	51

Source: Tanner and Wortley, 2002, cited in Wortley); Toronto Youth Crime and Victimization Survey

The results are supported by the 2007 CAMH survey (Wolfe and Chiodo 2008, cited in Wortley) of Ontario high school students. Among Grade 9 female students, 46 per cent reported that in the previous three months someone had made an unwanted sexual comment, gesture or joke towards them. Another 30 per cent claimed they had been subjected to unwanted sexual touching and 16 per cent said that someone had pulled at their clothing in a sexual manner.

3. What Do Critical Race Theories Tell Us About Violence in Ontario?

The above statistics are based on traditional definitions and understandings of violence. Part of the context for the discussion that follows in this report involves appreciating the different perspectives that scholars in the field of critical race studies bring to our understanding of violence.

In Volume 4, we have published a paper by Prof. Walcott and his colleagues that provides an analysis of critical race theories with particular reference to the current situation in Ontario. The literature review included in Volume 5 provides a further overview of published works in that field. We commend these treatments of the theories to those who wish a deeper understanding of them than can be conveyed by the brief mention we make of them here.

In brief, critical race scholars provide two important analyses through which to view violence. The first is to explain how both a deep history and the present reality of racism can produce violence, especially when combined with economic policies that create poverty for far too many racialized individuals. The second is to help us appreciate the ways in which racism and parts of the economic system are themselves experienced as violence by economically disadvantaged members of racialized communities.

In the analytical paper mentioned above, Prof. Walcott and his colleagues point out how from certain perspectives violence is not an aberration, but a pervasive part of the social structure and day-to-day reality for far too many Ontario residents:

> Our central thesis is that we cannot make sense of violence and crime without addressing racial oppression and the way such oppression produces poverty (Walcott et al., Volume 4: 319).
>
> What is significant is how the conditions of the last 30 years have produced an inward turn of violence as it is unleashed on the working poor and poor in their communities, often on themselves but not exclusively so. Violence in these communities must also be understood as over-policing, inadequate health access and care, gender violence in families and beyond, and homophobic and trans-phobic violence, alongside the social control and the political and cultural disenfranchisement of these affected communities from full citizenship in the province and the country (338).

What is particularly telling for our purposes is how much of what we heard in our consultations, and especially in our Neighbourhood Insight Sessions, corresponds to these theories.

4. What Did the Neighbourhoods We Visited Tell Us About Violence in Ontario?

Valuable as these statistics and analyses are, we must also pay attention to what we heard about the violence in the eight neighbourhoods we visited. As outlined in Chapter 2, to learn more about what violence means in human terms we visited eight neighbourhoods: four in Toronto and one each in Hamilton, Kitchener-Waterloo, Thunder Bay and Ottawa. In each, we met with community representatives who had worked with paid facilitators over the course of a few weeks to prepare for a discussion with us on issues of violence involving youth within their communities.

What we heard paints a bleak picture of violence in Ontario's disadvantaged communities. These important messages are well-summarized in the *Final Report on the Neighbourhood Insight Sessions*, which we have included in Volume 3 of our report. We accordingly are setting out that summary here, with the caution that it is a synthesis of what we heard across the eight neighbourhoods, rather than a portrait of the reality in any particular one of them. In general terms, we were told that:

> Violence is all around youth as a way to resolve disputes — bullying, police raids, movies and television, domestic violence, war. It's come to the point where some youth said they'd rather shoot someone than risk being beaten up, losing face or being embarrassed. Safety and belonging comes in numbers, and joining a gang for protection is an option (Dooling and Swerhun, Volume 3: v).

The insights in the report show that there are many types of violence involving youth. As summarized by our consultants, some of what is happening is violence perpetrated by youth against other people; there is also other violence in which youth are victims and this has a huge impact on them too — domestic violence, overly aggressive policing and institutional violence (government policies and systems, schools and the criminal justice system). Communities also point to a culture in which violence is glorified on TV and through aggressive actions of our governments. Poverty was also identified as a type of violence against youth.

More specifically, in one or more of the neighbourhoods we visited, youth and other community members said the following about the violence they were experiencing:

> **Gun violence**. Youth are getting guns at younger ages, sometimes as early as 10. Certain homes are known to store guns (e.g., collectors), and gang members know these people and steal from them. It's easy to buy guns, and rentals are available too.
>
> **Drugs**. Neighbourhoods are being divided by north and south, east and west for control over "turf" to sell drugs.... This leads to violence, shootings, home invasions, etc.
>
> **Robberies on the street**. For shoes, clothing, MP3 players and money.
>
> **Swarmings, verbal abuse, intimidation, threats**.
>
> **Gangs and claims of turf**. In at least one neighbourhood, this was traced directly to the power vacuum created after the police did a gang sweep three years ago. Young people stepped in to fill the power gap [leading to increased violence].
>
> **Attacks with knives**. Knives are often used as a tool of intimidation. They're also easier to purchase.

> **More girl on girl violence**. Some try to show their male counterparts that they're just as bad or as strong as they are. More girls are carrying weapons or drugs for guys.
>
> **More fights at school and school bullies**. Fights from school carry over to the streets. Being bullied has led many youth to travel far distances to avoid attending the same schools as a bully. Or, they skip school as an avoidance mechanism.
>
> **Home invasions**. In one community, we heard about people who are known to have drugs, cash or other stolen property becoming victims of home invasions.
>
> **Threats to witnesses**.
>
> **Sexual assault and dating violence**.
>
> **Violence in sports**. An example presented to us was of parents who fight with other parents at hockey games in front of other kids.... Violence in sports also happens at high school games where spectators from a school travel to another school to support their team but are jumped or rushed for coming on the other school's property. This causes [some] spectators to come armed.
>
> **Domestic abuse**. Parents beating each other up or beating up their kids.
>
> **Institutional violence**. Participants talked about the violence that's in the systems they deal with every day: government structures and policies that discriminate against them, schools that have a zero-tolerance policy and kick youth out for minor things, a police force that is prejudiced against youth and harasses and intimidates them and a criminal justice system that emphasizes punishment and can lead youth to become hardened and professional criminals.

We emphasize that the above is a composite picture and does not necessarily represent the reality across the neighbourhoods we visited. We also want to stress that the neighbourhoods we visited contain some strong and vibrant social networks, along with effective leaders and many residents who are committed to building safe and positive communities. They have many social assets on which to build, including valuable insights on priorities and approaches to maximize success.

That said, even a few of the manifestations of violence we were told about would be enough to severely challenge any neighbourhood. If we allow that violence to grow in intensity and impact, and fail to mobilize as a society to address the conditions that give rise to it, the prognosis for many neighbourhoods and indeed the province could be grim.

What Are the Trends?

1. Trends in the Statistics

Returning from the streets to the statistics for a moment, we note that while the aggregate rate of violence in Ontario may be relatively stable, there is increasing evidence to suggest that serious violence is becoming more and more concentrated among young people. The high level of youth involvement in violent crime, both as victims and perpetrators, is very disturbing.

It is admittedly difficult to determine with precision the extent of violence involving youth in Canada, primarily because official data is not released by age except for youth between 12 and 17 years of age, and because the definition of a youth beyond age 17 is far from consistent. There is, however, a huge body of international research demonstrating that young people are more likely to engage in crime and violence than older people. In general, rates of criminal offending and violent behaviour are highest among those in their mid-teens and early 20s.

These conclusions are supported by the available Canadian data set out in Prof. Wortley's paper provided in Volume 4. For example, data show that while 15-24-year-olds made up just 14 per cent of the Canadian population in 1999, they accounted for 36 per cent of all criminal incidents. These data indicate that the highest crime rate was for individuals between 15 and 19 years of age, followed closely by individuals from 20-24 years of age and those 25-29. Overall, the crime rate for 15-24-year-olds is three times higher than the national average.

As well, data obtained from the Ministry of the Attorney General indicate that although they represent only 23 per cent of Ontario's population, youth between 12 and 29 account for 56 per cent of those charged with a crime and 52 per cent of those charged with a violent crime in Ontario in 2007. Overall, youth between 18 and 24 have the highest violent crime rate in Ontario, followed by 25-29-year-olds and then 12-17-year-olds.

As with official police statistics, the results of the 2004 Canadian General Social Survey suggest violence is highly concentrated among youthful populations. Indeed, the violent victimization rate for respondents from 15-24 years of age is twice the rate for those 35-44 years of age and more than four times greater than those 55 or older. Surveys suggest that most young people in Ontario will suffer from some kind of violent victimization at some point in their life. Most of these will never be reported to the police and thus never end up in official crime statistics. At the same time, according to victims, two-thirds of all offenders were identified as being under 34 years of age, with 13 per cent falling within the young offender category (12-17 years of age) and 50 per cent identified as being young adults between 18 and 34 years of age.

To cite one additional and troubling finding, during the 1970s less than a quarter of Toronto's homicide victims were under 25 years of age. By contrast, since 1998 over 40 per cent of Toronto's homicide victims have been under 25. Similarly, official police data revealed that a record number of young offenders were charged with murder in Canada in 2006.

As noted above, we have drawn heavily in this chapter on the work of Prof. Wortley, and in particular his paper, provided in Volume 4. Having studied these data and issues for many years, and drawing on the works of others he cites in his paper, Prof. Wortley has discerned a number of significant trends from the available statistics. Of these, the following are particularly troubling:

> [T]here is growing evidence that reporting rates among youth, may be declining even further. For example, a 2000 survey of Toronto high school students (Tanner and Wortley, 2000) found that 50 per cent of crime victims reported their worst victimization experience to their parents or to the police. By 2007, however, this rate of reporting had dropped to only 10 per cent (School Community Safety Advisory Panel, 2008).… These data on reporting rates make it clear that many Ontario youth suffer from violent victimization in relative silence. These data also make it clear that official crime statistics seriously underestimate the true extent of youth violence in Ontario.
>
> [A]nalysis also reveals that serious violence is becoming increasingly concentrated among poor, minority males.… [A]lthough race-crime data are rarely made available in Ontario, the data that have been released strongly suggest that minority males are particularly vulnerable to violent crime. For example… between 1992 and 2003, the homicide rate for Toronto's Black community (10.1 per 100,000) was almost five times greater than the average for the city (2.4 per 100,000).
>
> In January 2008, the *Toronto Star* published the names and photographs of 113 homicide victims, murdered in 2007, from the Greater Toronto Area (including Halton, Peel, Durham and York regions). An analysis of these names and photos revealed that 44 of the murder victims were African-Canadian. Thus, while African-Canadians represent only seven per cent of the GTA's total population (according to the 2001 Census), in 2007 they represented almost 40 per cent of the city's homicide victims.

Additional analysis reveals that a disproportionate number of violent incidents either take place in socially disadvantaged communities and/or involve both victims and offenders from these communities. It is clear, therefore, that the intersection of race with economic and social deprivation may explain the overrepresentation of racial minorities in violent crime.

The character of violence has also changed over the past two decades, particularly in the province's largest cities. Two trends deserve special attention. First, serious violence is becoming more public in nature. For example, in 1974, only 50 per cent of Toronto's homicides took place in public places… whereas since 1990, over 75 per cent of all murders have occurred in public (Gartner and Thompson, 2004).

There is also evidence to suggest that the use of guns has increased significantly within Ontario's urban areas. For example, during the 1970s, only 25 per cent of Toronto's homicides were committed with a gun. Since 2000, however, approximately 50 per cent of all murders have been committed with a firearm (Gartner and Thompson, 2004).

According to a recent report by Statistics Canada, in 2006, 25 per cent of all firearms-related crime in Canada … took place in Toronto [home to less than 10 per cent of Canada's population]. Toronto recorded the third-highest rate of firearms-related crime … among Canadian cities.…

According to Statistics Canada, the use of firearms among young offenders … has also risen in three of the last four years. Indeed, according to the latest figures, firearms-related offences among young offenders have increased by one-third since 2002 (Statistics Canada, 2008).

A number of experts have also argued that serious youth gang activity has increased in Ontario over the past decade.…

[This] is very difficult to determine because of a lack of systematic, long-term study. There are simply no baseline data from which we can compare current estimates. However, the alleged increase in youth gang activity is certainly consistent with a number of other documented crime trends, including the concentration of youth violence among disadvantaged minority males, increased use of firearms among young people and the increasingly public nature of violent behaviour.

Interestingly, the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics has found that gang involvement is more prevalent in homicides involving youth (22 per cent) than homicides involving adults (nine per cent). (Volume 4: 55-57)

2. Trends in the Neighbourhoods

The trends we found in the neighbourhoods we visited fully reinforce the trends that Prof. Wortley discerned from the available statistics. We will again rely upon the synopsis prepared by our neighbourhood insight consultants to set out what we heard, and again emphasize that it is a record of what we were told, not of our findings. It is a composite that does not necessarily reflect the situation in any one neighbourhood. As we will see, however, the warning signs revealed by even just individual elements of this composite are a cause for great concern.

As set out in the *Neighbourhood Insight Final Report* reprinted in Volume 3, when talking to communities about violence involving youth, the line between roots and impacts is often blurred. This is because, from a community perspective, many of the impacts of violence eventually become roots of more violence, creating a negative cycle. The impacts of the violence described below are impacts felt not only by youth, but also by communities and our society as a whole. Everyone feels the impacts of violence involving youth. These impacts, again as set out in the consultants' report, include the following:

> **Fear in neighbourhoods is on the rise.** In some areas, people are virtual prisoners in their homes. The playgrounds are controlled by drug dealers and gang members. Innocent people are at risk because some shooters pursue their targets with no concern for innocent bystanders. People grow afraid of each other and unwilling to help each other. Shootings aren't always reported; therefore the resources to address gun violence are often not allocated to the community. Parents can be afraid to let their children participate in the community.... When communities live with fear, they often internalize it and see others as outsiders, which leads to further isolation.
>
> **A code of silence takes hold.** There is a fear of retaliation if someone calls the police to report a crime or to give a witness statement. Ineffective witness protection programs serve to reinforce the 'snitch code.' This fuels a code of silence. The level of fear in some neighbourhoods is indescribable, especially among some mothers — there is significant intimidation to ensure that people don't talk to the police.
>
> **Communities and youth get stereotyped.** The media portrays a negative stereotype of the community, and the people from the community start believing that stereotype. Youth can't get jobs because of where they live.
>
> **Communities, including youth, get desensitized to the violence.** Young children are exposed to violence and learn from it — whether it's at home or

seeing a violent police 'take-down.' Children as young as nine years old talk about violence as normal.

Violence becomes an acceptable way of dealing with conflict. When violence goes unaddressed, it perpetuates violence. Youth resort to violence to resolve disputes. They feel they need to be violent in order to survive and preserve their honour.

Gangs are created. Gangs are often linked to criminal activities, but youth also hang out in groups as a way of looking out for each other. The problem is that it can be hard for people to tell the difference, and groups of youth — regardless of their intent — can intimidate people.

Increased police presence. Many youth talked about not receiving respect from police, and about experiencing problems with police harassment. They talked about youth that get pulled over for no reason, and who don't feel like they can move freely in their own neighbourhoods.... Bravado from the police, particularly in their communication with youth, gets in the way of any form of trust and relationship-building between police and youth. There is criminalization of youth and a growing number of arrests. There is also increased racial profiling.

Focusing on school is harder for students, and teaching is harder. Living in an environment without security drains people's mental energy. Trying to meet the needs of students with a high teacher-to-student ratio is already a difficult task, and with the added challenges created by poverty, a lot of students fall through the cracks.

Schools are not safe places. Youth get bullied at school and bullying becomes more violent. Growing numbers of youth are expelled from school. They carry weapons to protect themselves, and drop out more frequently or transfer because schools aren't safe.

More youth suffer from depression, which can lead to suicide and self-harm, as well as substance abuse. Violence hurts youth self-esteem and stops youth from having ambition to do anything.

Social service agencies struggle to keep up with the demand for services. There's not enough funding, and agencies are competing instead of working together.

Once youth get involved in a violent lifestyle it's hard to get out.

Inaction leads to hopelessness. There is alienation between youth, community leaders and institutions. (Volume 3: 75-77)

One memorable scene in particular from our Ottawa visit captures the corrosive effect of this unrelenting exposure to violence:

> A small boy, about 11 years old, sits at a table that forms one end of an open square in a brightly lit community centre. He is talking about an incident in his public housing complex: a fight, with police called and an area cordoned off so he and his friends had to go around behind some of the buildings to get home. He describes seeing someone on the ground, someone in handcuffs. But it's not the incident that grips the visitors in the room, who have come to hear about the impact of violence involving youth on this neighbourhood. It's the boy's tone of voice as he tells the story, as if he is recounting something from a movie, or a trip to the corner store for ice cream. For him, this is normal.

The normalization of violence was a theme repeated many times during our visits – domestic violence, violence in schools, sexual violence, violence related to turf, violence related to the slightest perceived sign of disrespect. Some of it was the big, headline-grabbing violence of a guns and gangs culture, but more of it had to do with everyday incidents such as the one recounted by the young boy in Ottawa.

And a regrettable amount of it had to do with the widespread perception of "official violence." This perception rises quickly to the surface when residents, especially but not exclusively youth, talk about relations with the police. From across the disadvantaged communities, we heard reports of police stops of youth who were doing nothing more than walking home from a recreation centre or the mall. Many of the problems, they agreed, stem from overly aggressive police officers going up against youth, who already feel victimized, with both sides fearing a loss of face if they back down.

In one of our Neighbourhood Insight Sessions, during which there were many of these stories, one young participant suggested to the other youth present that youth need to be trained on how to manage overly aggressive police behaviour: to learn how to de-escalate the approach taken to these encounters by police. This comment, as much as the descriptions of individual negative encounters we heard, is another powerful example of how normalized violence has become.

That said, it would be unfair not to acknowledge and compliment the police officers we met in the communities who seemed to be fighting an uphill battle, not just within the neighbourhoods where they work, but with some of their colleagues and some parts of the command structure. Many youth recognize this but, while they had good things to say about community liaison or school-based officers, they didn't see them as the "real" police – the ones who engaged in unwarranted stops or conducted midnight raids.

In a variety of ways, we have let violence become normalized in our communities to a degree that would have been unthinkable not so long ago. With that normalization and all that lies behind it, as with the canary in the mine, we risk a great deal if we fail to heed an extremely telling warning sign about these neighbourhoods and our society as a whole.

What Do These Trends Portend?

What level of safety is sufficient? Should we take comfort from the fact that Ontario is, for most, a relatively safe place to live by national and international standards? Is it enough to observe that crime has not grown compared with 30 or 40 years ago, and then move on to some other pressing issue?

We think not. Indeed, we were struck by the observation made to us in England that the real concern of ministers there is that crime is not going down. As is the case in the United Kingdom, we have made massive investments in the justice and crime control systems, along with some significant social investments. We should not see it as an adequate return on our investment to simply maintain a stable crime rate, especially where violence is concerned.

But the more serious problem in Ontario is that we cannot count on that stability continuing. The trends we have identified in this chapter, although largely masked by the overall stability of the figures, suggest that Ontario is incubating an increase in violence, and in more serious violence. Ever-younger members of our communities are carrying and using guns. When this is happening, and when violence is brutal and conducted in public with no regard for social norms or the consequences for anyone, including the perpetrators, we see powerful signs that core social bonds are being stretched beyond the breaking point.

And as those bonds break, violence is normalized, sensibilities are brutalized, and communities are terrorized. The sowing of the seeds for community retreat, the ceding of public space to criminals by seeking safety in withdrawal from public life, and the silence that arises from the fear to speak out all increase the opportunities for violence. In doing so, they increase the perceived need for defensive violence or for gang membership for self-protection. This further escalates the risk of violence and accelerates the shutting down of avenues for positive community engagement and protection through collective solidarity and positive social structures and values.

There is simply no doubt that an atmosphere of fear and the threat of violence can crush a neighbourhood's spirit and the spirits of many of its residents. It deprives them of hope or optimism or any sense of belonging to the broader society. This, in turn, leads to many forms of increased isolation– from neighbours, from community services and from the larger community. Young people, in particular, feel hemmed in by gang violence and are unwilling to cross boundaries in search of education, recreation or jobs. Parents talk about being afraid to sit on their front steps for fear of becoming innocent bystanders in gang-related gunplay.

As we explored in Chapter 4, this is occurring in neighbourhoods that are often already isolated from the rest of the community because of poor or expensive public transportation systems and the lack of many amenities such as convenience stores, banks and community gathering places. One of our meeting places, for example, was a makeshift storefront youth centre in an all-but-abandoned strip mall hidden behind a derelict gas station. In another, the fee we paid to use a youth drop-in centre for our meeting provided the only funds available to turn on the heat on a very cold winter night. In another neighbourhood, not only were there no shops, but also the nearby pizza place refused to deliver because the drivers feared being robbed.

What is particularly disturbing about these isolating impacts is that they are happening to many communities that are largely composed of members of racialized groups. We have already traced in Chapter 4 how racism and other barriers have concentrated poverty in these groups, and how the housing market has then driven them into concentrations of those who suffer from high poverty. Alarmingly, we do not have to look far to see the likely consequences of increasingly isolated concentrations of racialized disadvantage.

Concentrations of disadvantage not only feed violence, but as well the violence occurring or arising in them further disadvantages everyone living there, and thus generates more violence. Our most immediate concerns must lie with those directly involved in violence and all those whose lives are disrupted and whose communities are made dysfunctional because of it. But we must also be concerned about the impact on our social fabric as a whole.

That impact comes from the fact that, whether or not Ontarians should believe that they are safer than in the past, many feel that the province is more violent than it was. This matters because the fear of crime, especially of the kind we have described, can not only hurt the economy and reduce levels of civic engagement, but it can also serve to stereotype and isolate particular communities.

When poverty is racialized and then ghettoized and associated with violence, the potential for the stigmatization of a specific group is high. That stigmatization can, in turn, further reduce opportunities for those groups and create pressure to reduce civil liberties and increase the criminalization of those who are seen as "others" by those in positions of influence and authority. The violence is seen as "over there," committed by and largely affecting "others." This leads to the view that resources should be spent to the extent necessary to contain and suppress it, rather than to the extent necessary to address the conditions that are giving rise to it.

The potential stigmatization, blaming and distancing add to our concerns about the trends and impacts we have identified. Something of real value in our society is at risk if we fail to look at this situation through the public health lens that we have traditionally used in this province to address deep social problems.

If these trends and impacts are seen as akin to a public health issue, then it makes no more sense for those not immediately affected to blame those who suffer from them, and otherwise ignore them, than it would to ignore an infectious disease outbreak in one community or neighbourhood. We know infections can spread and, even if they don't, they can weaken other parts of the body and its systems, with regrettable mid- to long-term consequences. Therefore, we deal with the problem collectively and cure it, because ignoring it will simply make matters worse for ever-increasing parts of our body politic. When we reject this time-honoured approach, we are expressing a very powerful message that our social fabric is in danger.

Conclusion

Measured objectively using data that track violent crime and homicides, it is clear to us that Ontario is not only relatively safe compared to most other jurisdictions, but also safer than it used to be, and growing safer still, for the majority of its citizens. However, for some in our province, Ontario is a very dangerous place and becoming more dangerous. Most immediately, these are our young males and, increasingly, females, who are Black or Aboriginal, who come from disadvantaged, complex-needs communities and have little reason to hope that conditions will change. But, importantly, they potentially include all those who have no choice but to live in disadvantaged communities and those who are increasingly affected by the violence that can be incubated there.

A number of current trends are deeply troubling. These include the increasing concentration of violent crime among younger people; the increasing frequency with which guns and knives are being used in disputes that might previously have been settled with fists; the increasing intensity and ferocity of the violence; the increasingly public nature of extreme violence; the growth in the prevalence of both guns and gangs; neighbourhoods trapped in a downward cycle of disadvantage and being challenged to provide the solidarity and positive role-modelling needed to help stem the violence; and a broader community inclined to write off these youth and these communities because they see them as the source of this problem rather than its victims.

At the same time, we need to note that Ontario is in the relatively early phases of this degree and kind of violence. Some of those we met referred to Ontario experiencing the first generation of violence driven by economic disadvantage and racism, compared to the United States and the United Kingdom, which they considered to be more deeply mired in second or third generations of this kind of violence. And, importantly, even the most disadvantaged communities in our province have good leaders, positive networks and many committed individuals working every day to strengthen and solidify them and to make them safer.

It is because this balance still exists, however precariously, that we consider Ontario to be at a crossroads.

Chapter 6:

Learning From Previous Reports

Introduction

In working to identify the most promising road to take from the crossroads we discussed in the previous chapter, we benefited from an enormous amount of work already undertaken in many fields relevant to an understanding of the roots of violence involving youth. From this body of work, we were able to draw upon many rich and deep veins of analysis and insight.

Prominent within that work are the many reports on racism, discrimination and the justice system that were commissioned by governments in this country over the last 30 years. Sadly, many of these reports seem to have faded into obscurity, despite the continuing soundness of their analyses and the contemporary pertinence of their recommendations.

In the first part of this chapter, we seek to bring these valuable studies back into the public discourse. We do so because of the importance of their authors' and contributors' insights, and also to demonstrate how clearly and consistently many key themes have been laid out for decision-makers. We believe that they provide compelling evidence that the fundamental reforms we contemplate are anchored in the views of many thoughtful individuals over several decades and respond well to concerns that have deeply troubled communities for even longer.

In the second part of this chapter, we look at some of the recent studies that have grappled with issues similar to those we are addressing, but primarily from a crime prevention or youth development perspective. Rather than provide a comparative analysis of the many reports, we highlight the broad range of issues that even a small sample of them have found to be relevant to this area of inquiry.

We must regrettably note that the many advantages brought to our work by the thinking within the government-commissioned reports also came with a significant disadvantage: the cynicism that resides in numerous communities because of the lack of action on many of these thoughtful and persuasive volumes.

Communities and individuals knowledgeable about the issues we are addressing have been consulted countless times. As just one example, Toronto's Jane and Finch community was the subject of at least 13 studies in the space of six recent years. We doubt that this is a record. To assist with these studies and reviews, individuals are again and again invited into a room and asked to share with strangers their personal experiences and deepest feelings. Often, it seems as though they must educate the people at the front of the room about elements of their own mandates, as well as the realities in the visited communities. The process naturally raises hopes and expectations among the people consulted and in their communities.

Then come the reports, filled with thoughtful findings, valuable insights and carefully considered recommendations. After that, though, more often than not there is silence. Once again, the expectations raised are not met. With the persistent lack of action, or even feedback, cynicism grows.

That so many dynamic individuals from diverse communities nonetheless came forward to help us is a powerful testament both to the seriousness of the issues we were asked to consider and the perseverance and determination of the people who confront them daily.

We deeply appreciate the cooperation, assistance and trust we were given. But we also had to reflect on why more action had not been taken on so many good ideas. We very much want a different result for our report and believe that understanding the fate of the earlier ones is essential to advance that goal. We also want to keep the faith with those who, notwithstanding the fate of some of the earlier studies, trusted us with their stories and insights.

We believe that part of the reason for the lack of action on so many excellent reports lies in their authors' providing specific recommendations to address all of the many wrongs and good ideas they heard. While understandable, this tends to leave the government receiving the report with a hugely complicated array of options to assess and prioritize, or sometimes just a shopping list to choose from.

At the same time, many reports did not include a governance structure or accountability framework to guide the implementation of their recommendations. It seems that the absence of a clear roadmap to show how a focused and cohesive reform agenda could flow from their report contributed to the advice of some of the previous authors falling by the wayside. With governments constantly pressed to deal with numerous complex issues across the range of their mandates, the lack of attention to the "how" in addition to the "what" can lead to a report being lost within internal committees, which have no clear advice on a structure to pull together the needed work.

For these reasons, we proceeded differently. We, of necessity, cover a lot of ground and provide much advice to the Premier, but believe that our report will be of greatest value if it focuses its recommendations on broad and sustainable long-term change and presents a viable governance structure and accountability framework to drive that change. We believe that is the best way to advance our advice and keep the faith with those who have contributed their valuable time and ideas to our review.

While our report accordingly contains fewer recommendations than previous reports, it nonetheless reflects and draws strength from the excellent work those reports did to expose and analyze so many of the key issues we confronted.

The Reports

In the first section that follows (Section 1), we discuss reports, primarily those commissioned by governments, that touch on racism and discrimination. In the following section, we present an overview of recommendations from a selection of reports that have addressed issues related to crime prevention and youth development. We cannot highlight here all of the work we reviewed—the sheer mass of material, even in a cursory summary, would easily have overwhelmed this report. For illustrative purposes, we discuss a representative selection of reports containing recommendations broadly relevant to our mandate.

For the first category, we looked at 31 reports commissioned by or, generally, submitted to governments since 1977 and drew from them 17 important themes of particular significance to our work. For the second, we considered 25 reports and drew from them another thematic overview of how they treated crime prevention, youth development and other relevant issues. In Appendix 3, we also provide a short synopsis of each of these reports so that those wanting to dig deeper can determine which might be most useful to them.

In presenting these overviews, we stress that these are not the only categories of published works we considered. The literature reviews set out in Volume 5 consider hundreds of relevant academic studies. And the work done for us by the Grassroots Youth Coalition, presented in Volume 3, reflects the views set out in several reports produced at the community level in recent years. Our contract with GYC also involved collecting and making accessible numerous other grassroots reports, on which we drew as they became available. That collection will also serve as a valuable resource for the future.

1. Reports Addressing Racism and Discrimination

This section provides a thematic overview of recommendations from key reports that addressed racism and discrimination in the context of several issues relevant to our mandate. To illustrate this earlier work, we selected 31 reports commissioned by or submitted to governments in Canada over the last 30 years:

Archibald, B. (1989). *Report of the Royal Commission on the Donald Marshall, Jr. Prosecution*. Volume 6 *Prosecuting Officers and the Administration of Justice in Nova Scotia: A Research Study*. Halifax: Government of Nova Scotia.

Brodeur, J.-P. (1991). *Access to Justice and Equality of Treatment*. Ottawa: Law Reform Commission of Canada.

Canadian Bar Association (1993). *Touchstones for Change: Equality, Diversity and Accountability*. Report of the Task Force on Gender Equality. Toronto: Canadian Bar Association.

Carter, G. (1979). *Report to the Civic Authorities of Metropolitan Toronto and Its Citizens*. Toronto: Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto.

Clark, S. (1989). Research Study prepared for the Report of the Royal Commission on the Donald Marshall, Jr. Prosecution. Volume 3 *The Mi'kmaq and Criminal Justice in Nova Scotia*. Halifax: Government of Nova Scotia.

Cole, D., and M. Gittens (1994). *Racism Behind Bars: The Treatment of Black and Other Racial Minority Prisoners in Ontario Prisons*. Interim Report of the Commission on Systemic Racism in the Ontario Criminal Justice System. Toronto: Government of Ontario.

——— (1995). *Report of the Commission on Systemic Racism in the Ontario Criminal Justice System*. Toronto: Government of Ontario.

Etherington, B., W. Bogart, M. Irish, and G. Stewart (1991). *Preserving Identity by Having Many Identities: A Report on Multiculturalism and Justice*. Windsor Law School Roundtable. Windsor: Faculty of Law, University of Windsor.

Four-Level Government/African Canadian Community Working Group (1992). *Towards a New Beginning: The Report and Action Plan of the Four-Level Government/African Canadian Working Group*. Toronto: African Canadian Community Working Group.

Gibson Smith, C. (1994). *Proud but Cautious: Homophobic Abuse in Nova Scotia*. Halifax: Nova Scotia Public Interest Research Group.

Hamilton, A., and C. Sinclair (1991). *Report of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry of Manitoba. Volume 1: The Justice System and Aboriginal People*. Winnipeg: Government of Manitoba.

Head, W. and D. Clairmont (1989). Research study prepared for the Royal Commission on the Donald Marshall, Jr. Prosecution. Volume 4 *Discrimination against Blacks in Nova Scotia: The Criminal Justice System*. Halifax: Government of Nova Scotia.

House of Commons (1984). *Equality Now! Report of the Special Committee on Visible Minorities in Canadian Society*. Ottawa: Government of Canada.

Law Reform Commission of Canada (1991). *Report on Aboriginal Peoples and Criminal Justice: Equality, Respect and the Search for Justice (Report 34)*. Ottawa: Law Reform Commission of Canada.

Law Society of British Columbia Gender Bias Committee (1992). *Report on Gender Equality in the Justice System*, Volumes 1 and 2. Vancouver: Law Society of British Columbia.

LeSage, P. (2005). *Report on the Police Complaints System in Ontario*. Toronto: Government of Ontario.

Lewis, C. (1992). *Report of the Race Relations and Policing Task Force*. Toronto: Government of Ontario.

Lewis, S. (1992). *Report on Race Relations in Ontario*. Toronto: Government of Ontario.

Linden, S. (2007). *Report of the Ipperwash Inquiry*. Toronto: Government of Ontario.

McLeod, R. (1996). *A Report and Recommendations on Amendments to the Police Services Act Respecting Civilian Oversight of Police*. Toronto: Government of Ontario.

Ontario Human Rights Commission (2003). *Paying the Price: The Human Cost of Racial Profiling*. Inquiry Report. Toronto: Government of Ontario.

Peterson, K. (1992). *The Justice House: Report of the Special Advisor on Gender Equality (to the Minister of Justice)*. Yellowknife: Department of Justice, Northwest Territories.

Pitman, W. (1977). *Now Is Not Too Late.* Toronto: Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto.

Race Relations and Policing Task Force (1989). *Report of the Race Relations and Policing Task Force.* Toronto: Government of Ontario.

Rolf, C. (1991). *Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Policing in Relation to the Blood Tribe.* Edmonton: Government of Alberta.

Royal Commission on the Donald Marshall, Jr. Prosecution (1989a). Report of the Royal Commission on the Donald Marshall, Jr. Prosecution. Volume 1 *Commissioners' Report.* Halifax: Government of Nova Scotia.

——— (1989b). Report of the Royal Commission on the Donald Marshall, Jr. Prosecution. Volume 2 *Public Policing in Nova Scotia.* Halifax: Government of Nova Scotia.

Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General (1988). *Taking Responsibility: Report of the Standing Committee on Justice and Solicitor General on its Review of Sentencing, Conditional Release and Related Aspects of Corrections.* Ottawa: Government of Canada.

Task Force on the Criminal Justice System and its Impact on the Indian and Métis People of Alberta (1991). *Justice on Trial: Report of the Task Force on the Criminal Justice System and its Impact on the Indian and Métis People of Alberta* (Cawsey Report). Edmonton: Government of Alberta.

Ubale, B. (1977). *Equal Opportunity and Public Policy: A Report on concerns of the South Asian Canadian Community regarding their place in the Canadian Mosaic.* Submitted to the Attorney General of Ontario.

Urban Alliance on Race Relations (1993, March 26). Conference report: *The Justice System: Is It Serving or Failing Minorities?* The Canadian Bar Association–Ontario, The Law Society of Upper Canada, the Ontario Women's Directorate and the Ministry of the Attorney General. Osgoode Hall, Toronto.

While these reports cover an enormous range of issues, we found within them 17 themes of particular relevance to our work. For ease of reference, we have grouped them into six general categories:

A. The justice system generally:

1. Research, monitor and evaluate racial and gender discrimination in the criminal justice system.
2. Increase anti-racism, cross-cultural and gender training for criminal justice system occupations, with community involvement.
3. Increase the number of visible minorities and women in criminal justice system occupations.
4. Establish an Aboriginal Justice Institute.

B. Policing:

5. Recruit more visible minorities, Aboriginal people and women to police forces.
6. Expand anti-racism, gender and youth-specific training for police, with community involvement.
7. Increase community policing efforts with an anti-racism component and create a community and police advisory group on anti-racism training.
8. Establish local community policing committees with youth participation.
9. Limit the use of racial profiling.
10. Monitor the use of force.
11. Research and monitor police race data.
12. Improve and monitor the police complaints system.

C. Sentencing:

13. Decrease incarceration and increase rehabilitation with diversion and alternatives to sentencing programs.

D. Prison:

14. Provide cultural and gender-specific training for corrections, parole and probation workers.

15. Provide offenders with culturally appropriate services.

E. Education:

16. Develop an anti-racism policy for schools and school boards, provide curricula that represent Canada's full history and, through the recruitment and training of teachers, advance equity and inclusion in the classrooms.

F. Governance:

17. Create a directorate and Cabinet committee on race relations.

A. The justice system

1. Research, monitor and evaluate racial and gender discrimination in the criminal justice system.

Numerous reports have illustrated the existence of racism and discrimination toward visible minorities and women within the criminal justice system. Yet, despite those reports' recommendations, little research or monitoring exists within the criminal justice system itself to address the issue.

Several reports from Ontario and other provinces and territories have made similar recommendations on monitoring racial and/or gender discrimination and representation within the criminal justice system (Etherington, et al., 1991; Head and Clairmont, 1989; Law Society of British Columbia Gender Bias Committee, 1992).

In particular, Stephen Lewis (Lewis, S. 1992) recommended establishing an inquiry into race relations and the criminal justice system, specifying that the inquiry should look at the work of Crown attorneys, courts administration, the judiciary, adult and youth correctional facilities, community policing, and probation and parole services. As a direct result, the Commission on Systemic Racism in the Criminal Justice System was launched in 1994. The report of that inquiry called for a pilot project, funded by the Province, to monitor the treatment of visible minorities in the criminal justice system (Cole and Gittens, 1995).

Manitoba's Aboriginal Justice Inquiry went further, emphasizing the need for community involvement in the design, implementation, collection, monitoring and analysis of data —in that case, to compare how the criminal justice system has impacted Aboriginal people versus non-Aboriginal people. The report further recommended that the data collected be used to evaluate programs for Aboriginal offenders (Hamilton and Sinclair, 1991).

2. Increase anti-racism, cross-cultural and gender training for criminal justice system occupations, with community involvement.

In 1977, Dr. Bhausaheb Ubale recommended that multicultural/multiracial training should be institutionalized as a compulsory part of every police officer's initial and service-level training (Ubale, 1977). The 1992 report *Towards a New Beginning* recommended anti-racism and cultural training at all levels of the criminal justice system (Four-Level Government/African Canadian Community Working Group, 1992).

Cole and Gittens likewise recommended anti-racism training programs for each justice occupation, both for educational purposes and to screen out applicants with racial biases. That report also recommended that the Office of Child and Family Services Advocacy be the designated anti-racism coordinator for all young offenders (Cole and Gittens, 1995).

In Nova Scotia, a research report prepared for the Royal Commission on the Donald Marshall, Jr. Prosecution recommended that the attorney general establish continuing education programs for Crown prosecutors, specifically with materials on systemic discrimination toward Black and Aboriginal peoples in the criminal justice system (Archibald, 1989).

Another research report prepared for the same royal commission recommended that law schools and university criminology departments help provincial and federal judicial councils develop race relations education courses for judges. They also recommended that judges be encouraged to take sabbaticals to gain a better understanding of the experiences of Black and Aboriginal peoples and other visible minorities (Head and Clairmont, 1989).

Finally, there have been recommendations regarding education for visible minorities or communities *about* the criminal justice system (e.g., Ubale, 1977; Rolf, 1991; Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2003). This was premised on the view that many youth, especially new immigrants or refugees, may be unaware of their rights and responsibilities under the criminal justice system. Head and Clairmont also recommended that educational materials for youth be developed to explain their rights and responsibilities as citizens in dealings with the police. The importance of citizen participation in police and policy development was also underscored.

3. Increase the number of visible minorities and women in criminal justice system occupations.

Many reports have recognized the gap in the representation of visible minorities in criminal justice system occupations (including high-level positions, such as judges) and have recommended increasing representation through recruitment and promotion (Royal Commission on the Donald Marshall, Jr. Prosecution, 1989a; Brodeur, 1991). By increasing the representation of visible minorities, the criminal justice system would better reflect the ethnically diverse population it serves (Peterson, 1992). The report *Towards a New Beginning* recommended that relevant levels of government expedite efforts to appoint more African-Canadians to the judiciary (Four-Level Government/African Canadian Community Working Group, 1992).

It has also been suggested that recruitment of visible minorities to criminal justice system occupations should start early, in law school or relevant university programs. The Canadian Bar Association suggested that this could be accomplished, for example, by involving visible minority law students in helping to create more inclusive law schools (Canadian Bar Association, 1993).

4. Establish an Aboriginal Justice Institute.

Reports from other provinces, including a research study prepared for the Royal Commission on the Donald Marshall, Jr. Prosecution (Clark, 1989) in Nova Scotia and Manitoba's Aboriginal Justice Inquiry (Hamilton and Sinclair, 1991), recommended establishing an Aboriginal Justice Institute. Such an institute would address matters involving Aboriginal persons in the criminal justice system, communicate community needs and concerns to an Aboriginal criminal court and conduct research on Aboriginal customary law.

B. Policing

5. Recruit more visible minorities, Aboriginal people and women to police forces.

From the 1977 Pitman report onward, reports have persistently recommended recruiting more visible minorities, Aboriginal people and women to police forces to better reflect the communities they represent and to alleviate racism within the police service (Ubale, 1977; Carter, 1979; Race Relations and Policing Task Force, 1989; Brodeur, 1991; Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2003). With employment equity, racial minorities and Aboriginal communities can, by participating in the administration of justice, help their communities to speak for themselves (Urban Alliance on Race Relations, 1993).

These concerns extend beyond race and gender, indicating the depth of the concern about an unrepresentative police force. For example, a Nova Scotia report suggested that police forces establish a lesbian and gay community liaison officer and representative position to improve understanding of gay and lesbian issues, within the police and between the police and the gay and lesbian communities (Gibson Smith, 1994).

It has been recommended that police promotion policies ensure that visible minorities have equal opportunities for promotion, including to high-level police management positions (Ubale, 1977; Pitman, 1977; Head and Clairmont, 1989; Race Relations and Policing Task Force, 1989). The Race Relations and Policing Task Force (1989) recommended a regulatory requirement for police services to establish visible minority hiring and promotion goals and timetables. Many reports have also recommended more active outreach and recruitment methods geared to visible minority communities (e.g., Pitman, 1977; House of Commons, 1984). The report of the Royal Commission on the Donald Marshall, Jr. Prosecution suggested that the guidelines prepared by the Greater Toronto Region Working Group on the recruitment and selection of visible minority police officers should be circulated to other jurisdictions (Royal Commission on the Donald Marshall, Jr. Prosecution, 1989a).

Reports have recommended ongoing review of and research into police recruitment methods to ensure that more visible minorities, Aboriginal people and women are hired and to identify barriers to representative recruitment (Race Relations and Policing Task Force, 1989; Head and Clairmont, 1989; Etherington, et al., 1991). Recruitment targets have been recommended as a way of ensuring that police services hire more visible minorities, Aboriginal people and women, and thus adequately reflect the community as a whole (Race Relations and Policing Task Force, 1989; Royal Commission on the Donald Marshall, Jr. Prosecution, 1989a; Rolf, 1991). The Race Relations and Policing Task Force (1989) went further, recommending that in any year in which a police force failed to meet such targets, a review board report the failure to the Human Rights Commission as an allegation of systemic discrimination in employment practices.

6. Expand anti-racism, gender and youth-specific training for police, with community involvement.

Many reports have strongly recommended cross-cultural, anti-racism and race-relations (and ethics) training for police in all positions, and that this training be integrated throughout police training, not offered as a section or single course. For example, the Pitman report recommended that the former Metro Toronto Police Commission develop a strategy for an intense program of racial and cross-cultural understanding for every member of the police force, with additional training for Community Services Officers. It also recommended placing more emphasis on pre-service training in race relations, and on racism and racial tension in in-service training (Pitman, 1977). Twelve years later, the Race Relations and Policing Task Force (1989) found police race relations training inadequate and recommended an immediate moratorium on all such programs pending a full review, by several authorities and civilians, for the purposes of developing a new training program to be integrated into all aspects of police training.

Clare Lewis's report recommended integrating race-relations and anti-racism components into the mission statements of the education and training divisions of police forces. He also recommended a police education and training division be established, with a mandate to include implementing in-service race-relations training for all Ontario police officers. Further, advisory committees with community and police representatives could be established to advise on the integration of race-relations and anti-racism content into police training. A "race-relations and policing monitoring audit board" should be established to monitor race relations in police training (Lewis, C., 1992). Justice Alexander Hickman similarly recommended establishing a system for monitoring provincial police training (Royal Commission on the Donald Marshall, Jr. Prosecution, 1989a).

Other reports have recommended that race-relations training be extended beyond the beginning of a police officer's career to be continuous and frequently updated to reflect the changing needs of the community. Stephen Lewis's report recommended that the Government of Ontario establish an "Ontario police training, education and development board," with police and community representation, to implement the recommendations of the Strategic Planning Committee on Police Training and Education (Lewis, S., 1992).

The Honourable Sidney Linden, commissioner of the Ipperwash Inquiry, recommended that the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services issue a directive to all police services in Ontario requiring police officers to report incidents of racism or other culturally insensitive behaviour by other officers to their supervisors. He further recommended that the Ontario Provincial Police establish an internal process to ensure that racist and other culturally insensitive behaviour by police officers is dealt with publicly (Linden, 2007).

Toronto, like other urban centres, may seem to have more visible racial tensions, but small towns and remote communities are increasingly dealing with race-relations situations involving police. Areas with police forces of fewer than 100 employees may not have the capacity to implement race-relations training. Clare Lewis recommended developing protocols between such police forces and the Ontario Provincial Police for training support (such as trained facilitators) (Lewis, C., 1992).

Numerous reports have stated that visible minorities and communities must be involved in developing race-relations training for the police (Carter, 1979; Race Relations and Policing Task Force, 1989; Lewis, C., 1992; Task Force on the Criminal Justice System and its Impact on the Indian and Métis People of Alberta, 1991). Officers assigned to areas of high visible minority concentration should receive appropriate race-relations training for and by visible minorities (Royal Commission on the Donald Marshall, Jr. Prosecution, 1989b). The report on the Ipperwash Inquiry went further, proposing data collection studies designed in partnership with First Nation organizations, and an independent, third-party evaluation of police decision-making and operations with respect to awareness training and recruitment initiatives (Linden, 2007).

7. Increase community policing efforts with an anti-racism component and create a community and police advisory group on anti-racism training.

Among its many other recommendations on community relations, the Race Relations and Policing Task Force recommended that police officers regularly attend schools, citizenship classes and organization meetings in the community to explain their role and function to members of the community (Race Relations and Policing Task Force, 1989).

The Race Relations and Policing Task Force and many other reports recommended creating a community and police advisory group on racism training to reflect the community perceptions of policing (e.g., Rolf, 1991). The Royal Commission on the Donald Marshall, Jr. Prosecution recommended that the Nova Scotia Police Commission, municipal police departments and police commission boards develop innovative outreach programs and liaison roles to provide visible minorities with more positive police interaction (Royal Commission on the Donald Marshall, Jr. Prosecution, 1989a).

Clare Lewis's report recommended establishing community policing with a defined anti-racism component to eliminate systemic barriers in police policies, practices and procedures. It also recommended that advisory committees with community and police representatives be established to report to the assistant deputy minister, Police Education and Training Division. These committees would advise on the integration of race-relations and anti-racism content in police training. The community's right to participate in setting policing policies and priorities should be clearly defined. In order to facilitate community participation, it was recommended that a community policing branch be created within the Police Services Division, with a director who would be responsible for the advancement of community policing in Ontario (Lewis, C., 1992). The Pitman report recommended establishing a task force to study community-based preventative policing (Pitman, 1977).

8. Establish local community policing committees with youth participation.

Reports by Gerald Emmett Cardinal Carter (Carter, 1979) and by David Cole and Margaret Gittens (Cole and Gittens, 1995) recommended that police services establish local community policing committees at divisional levels, by geographical area or by community grouping. Part of the committees' role would be to develop agreements with police to establish policing objectives and standards that reflect community needs. Cole and Gittens further recommend that such committees include youth. The Race Relations and Policing Task Force (1989) also stipulated that membership in such committees should be reviewed regularly to ensure that representation fully reflected the community's visible minority population.

Research prepared for the Royal Commission on the Donald Marshall, Jr. Prosecution recommended that police officers visit schools, minority organizations and other community organizations to become more knowledgeable about and better understand the challenges faced by local communities, including children and youth (Head and Clairmont, 1989).

The Cole and Gittens report recommended that police service boards ensure that their policies for policing schools reflect community policing committee goals, and recommended that they work with school boards on guidelines for calling police into schools (Cole and Gittens, 1995).

9. Limit the use of racial profiling.

In the report *Paying the Price: The Human Cost of Racial Profiling*, the Human Rights Commission recommended that all public safety and protection organizations/institutions monitor and take steps to prevent racial profiling (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2003).

10. Monitor the use of force.

In his report, Stephen Lewis recognized the need for consensus on the use of force, to establish clearer guidelines for police officers regarding the use of force and alternatives to lethal force and to file a report whenever guns are used. He also recommended that the Ontario government promptly consult the public on and then amend the *Police Services Act* Regulations regarding the use of force (Lewis, S., 1992). The Clare Lewis report also recommended that police use of force be closely reconsidered and clarified (Lewis, C., 1992). *Towards a New Beginning* recommended the implementation of that recommendation (Four-Level Government/African Canadian Community Working Group, 1992). The report on the Urban Alliance on Race Relations conference recommended monitoring the use of force by police to determine whether it differs according to race, gender and the socio-economic status of the offender (*Urban Alliance on Race Relations*, 1993). The Ipperwash Inquiry report recommended amending *Police Services Act* Regulations to require police officers to file a report, with disciplinary repercussions for failure to do so, whenever they witness the use of force by police officers on civilians that requires medical treatment (Linden, 2007).

11. Research and monitor police race data.

Numerous reports on racism and discrimination in the criminal justice system have recommended that police departments collect and monitor racial or ethnic data on those who are accused, arrested or convicted (e.g., Etherington, et al., 1991). Research prepared for the Royal Commission on the Donald Marshall, Jr. Prosecution recommended that police departments be *required* to collect, maintain and monitor data by race and ethnicity regarding harassment and complaints against police (Head and Clairmont, 1989).

Stephen Lewis (Lewis, S., 1992) and Clare Lewis (Lewis, C., 1992) both recommended establishing a community-based monitoring and audit board to work with police forces and municipalities, in conjunction with the Race Relations and Policing Branch of the Ministry of the Solicitor General, to conduct a systematic audit of police race relations policies. (Clare Lewis had earlier made a similar recommendation as chair of the Race Relations and Policing Task Force (Race Relations and Policing Task Force, 1989)). That recommendation was supported in *Towards a New Beginning* (Four-Level Government/African Canadian Community Working Group, 1992).

12. Improve and monitor the police complaints system.

Although the terms of reference of the Race Relations and Policing Task Force did not include an examination of the mechanisms for dealing with complaints about the police, it did recommend that a definition of racially prejudiced police behaviour be developed and incorporated into the regulations to the *Police Act* (Race Relations and Policing Task Force, 1989). Such a definition would have had the effect of signalling to the community the types of police behaviour that could form the basis of a race-related complaint.

In his *Report to Civic Authorities of Metropolitan Toronto and its Citizens*, Gerald Emmett Cardinal Carter recommended establishing a commissioner of complaints to act as a judge in overseeing race-related complaints against the justice system (Carter, 1979). Stephen Lewis recommended that the Office of the Police Complaints Commissioner be given the mandate to conduct the initial investigation and adjudication of race-related complaints (Lewis, S., 1992).

Roderick McLeod's *Report and Recommendation on Amendments to the Police Services Act Respecting Civilian Oversight of Police* recommended that existing complaints and discipline systems be modernized and streamlined (McLeod, 1996).

In his *Report on the Police Complaints System in Ontario*, the Honourable Patrick LeSage suggested that a stronger form of civilian oversight of the police is needed to correct existing problems and to strengthen the community's confidence and trust in them. He recommended creating an independent civilian body to administer the public complaints system in Ontario, to receive complaints and determine whether they should be pursued further. It would be led by a civilian (not a police officer) and include an advisory group with community and police representatives to discuss systemic concerns, and undertake to educate the public about the complaints system (LeSage, 2005). Legislation based on the report has been passed by the Ontario government and awaits implementation.

After Nova Scotia established a new Police Review Board to handle race-related complaints, a report recommended that the board be closely monitored to ensure that it handled racism and discrimination complaints against the police effectively (Head and Clairmont, 1989). Other reports recommended including visible minorities on complaints appeal bodies (e.g., Task Force on the Criminal Justice System and its Impact on the Indian and Métis People of Alberta, 1991). The report on the Urban Alliance on Race Relations conference strongly suggested that police-related complaints should be collected and monitored by a public board of inquiry, independent of the police (*Urban Alliance on Race Relations*, 1993). Cardinal Carter also supported an independent complaints mechanism (Carter, 1979).

C. Sentencing

13. Decrease incarceration and increase rehabilitation with diversion and alternatives to sentencing programs.

In 1987, the Canadian Sentencing Commission[1] reviewed numerous reports from official bodies on parole and sentencing in Canada from 1831 to 1983. All the reports concluded that incarceration is "debilitating rather than rehabilitating" and recommended that incarceration be moderately applied (cited in Brodeur, 1991).

After public hearings and visits to correctional institutions, a second report by the House of Commons Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General (chaired by David Daubney) in 1988, supported the Sentencing Commission's original recommendation to develop alternatives to the use of incarceration (Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General, 1988).

Other reports recommended that more diversion and alternative sentencing programs be developed with communities specifically for Black and Aboriginal peoples (Royal Commission on the Donald Marshall, Jr. Prosecution, 1989a; Archibald, 1989; House of Commons, 1984; Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General, 1988). An alterative measures program would also include reconciliation and restoration of peace measures within the community. The Law Reform Commission of Canada recommended alternatives to prison be used whenever possible, and that programs providing alternatives to sentencing be accessible for Aboriginal peoples and other visible minorities (Law Reform Commission of Canada, 1991).

The Aboriginal Justice Inquiry of Manitoba saw a need for a new approach to sentencing wherein incarceration would only be used when the offender posed a danger to another individual or the community, when it reflected the gravity of the offence, or when an offender did not comply with the terms of any other sentence. The report further suggested that the Government of Manitoba establish an Aboriginal diversion and alternative measures program that integrated Aboriginal culture and communities. The inquiry also recommended that Aboriginal parole officers supervise all Aboriginal offenders, and that cross-cultural training be provided for all non-Aboriginal probation staff (Hamilton and Sinclair, 1991).

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[1] *2006 Canadian Criminal Justice Association. Brief to the Standing Committee on Justice, Human Rights, Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness. House of Commons 39th Parliament, 1st Session on Amendments to the Criminal Code of Canada (Conditional sentencing) Bill C-9. Ottawa. Link* http://www.ccja-acjp.ca/en/c9en.html

Diversion and alternatives to sentencing have been proposed specifically to keep youth out of prison if possible. The Aboriginal Justice Inquiry of Manitoba recommended that police look at alternatives to laying charges in cases involving Aboriginal youth and use their discretion where appropriate (Hamilton and Sinclair, 1991). Cole and Gittens recommended that the Ministry of the Attorney General establish a protocol with the Federal Department of Justice to allow youth charged with drug offences to be diverted from the criminal process into alternative measures programs. They also recommended that the Ministry of Community and Social Services, with existing bail programs and community organizations, consider a bail supervision program for youths aged 12-15 (Cole and Gittens, 1995).

A research report prepared for the Royal Commission on the Donald Marshall, Jr. prosecution recommended that the Criminal Code contain counterparts to the alternative measures provisions of the *Young Offenders Act* for disposing of and diverting cases against adult Aboriginal offenders. It also suggested that the alternative measures guidelines be amended so that, for young offenders, alternative measures programs would be considered in every case (Clark, 1989).

The Law Society of British Columbia recommended that, given the lack of social services available for young women in the province, judges should "exercise restraint in the use of criminal sanctions towards female juveniles, to prevent a revictimization of these youth." It also recommended that governments reduce the number of women incarcerated for non-violent crime and increase the use of electronic monitoring and community-based sentences. Where incarceration is necessary, it was recommended that local facilities be used to maintain contact between women and their families and to help them keep their jobs (Law Society of British Columbia Gender Bias Committee, 1992). While this applied to young women, it could also be applied to youth generally.

D. Prison

14. Provide cultural and gender-specific training for corrections, parole and probation workers.

The Royal Commission on the Donald Marshall, Jr. Prosecution recommended ongoing anti-racism training for all corrections, parole and probation workers, and that such training be developed with communities. In addition, the report recommended establishing a clear policy stating that any discriminatory conduct (including racial slurs) by correctional workers would not be tolerated. The report also recommended recruiting more Aboriginal and Black people in professional and non-professional positions in correctional services. It further suggested that where there are a significant number of incarcerated Aboriginal and Black people, corrections institutions offer programs meeting their educational, cultural and religious needs (Royal Commission on the Donald Marshall, Jr. Prosecution, 1989a).

15. Provide offenders with culturally appropriate services.

Many reports, particularly those focused on the incarceration of Aboriginals and African-Canadians, recommend that they be provided with culturally appropriate services in correctional institutions. The reports of the Royal Commission on the Donald Marshall, Jr. Prosecution supported rehabilitation programs for Aboriginal and Black inmates and former inmates that take into account their background and needs (Hickman, 1989; Clark, 1989).

The Aboriginal Justice Inquiry of Manitoba recommended that correctional institutions develop a policy through which Aboriginal elders (recognized by provincial Aboriginal organizations) would provide Aboriginal inmates with traditional assistance or spiritual advice and counselling (Hamilton and Sinclair, 1991).

E. Education

16. Develop an anti-racism policy for schools and school boards, provide curricula that represent Canada's full history and, through the recruitment and training of teachers, advance equity and inclusion in the classrooms.

The Ubale report and the Pitman report, *Now Is Not Too Late*, both recognized a need to accept the reality of racism within schools (Ubale, 1977; Pitman, 1977). Seven years later, the *Equality Now* report recommended that provincial governments urge school boards to develop and implement a race relations policy (House of Commons, 1984). Stephen Lewis's *Report on Race Relations in Ontario* recommended that the Minister of Education establish a strong monitoring mechanism to follow up on the implementation of anti-racism policies in Ontario school boards (Lewis, S., 1992).

A report on anti-gay and anti-lesbian abuse from Nova Scotia went further and recommended that all school boards, colleges and universities develop a zero-tolerance policy for violence (Gibson Smith, 1994). The *Towards a New Beginning* report recommended that Toronto education boards establish a public body, reporting to the board of trustees, to consider race-related issues raised by students, teachers and parents Four-Level Government/African Canadian Community Working Group (1992).

However, developing race-relations and anti-violence policies would be ineffective while Ontario's educational curriculum continues to largely exclude visible minorities, including African-Canadians and Aboriginals. Bhausaheb Ubale's report recommended revising both teacher training and the school curriculum to be more inclusive and to eliminate stereotypes (Ubale, 1977). Clare Lewis's report recommended revising the school curriculum to include anti-discrimination and diversity training (Lewis, C., 1992). The Pitman report suggested that school boards be given adequate funding to develop and implement multicultural programs and materials on the roots of minority people in the City of Toronto and programs for children and adolescents designed to stop racism towards visible minorities. The report also recommended providing more professional development focused on racism for teachers and school administrators, as well as developing a community education program on race-related issues for children and parents (Pitman, 1977). The Ipperwash Inquiry report recommended that the Ministry of Education establish formal working relationships with Aboriginal organizations to promote more Aboriginal perspectives and content in the elementary and secondary school curricula (Linden, 2007).

Equality Now! supported those recommendations and further recommended that a then-proposed ministry of multiculturalism examine the inclusiveness of the curriculum, including reviewing teaching and resource materials to identify possible racial bias. It said boards should introduce a home-school liaison officers program and develop multicultural student leadership programs. The report also suggested that government and school boards increase the number of visible minorities in teaching and administrative positions through affirmative action programs (House of Commons, 1984). A report to the Minister of Justice of the Northwest Territories, *The Justice House: Report of the Special Advisor on Gender Equality*, encouraged more inclusion of women in education and the curriculum (Peterson, 1992).

Equality Now! recognized the significance of early learning. It recommended more funding for research and development of minimum standards for those working in early childhood education, multicultural teacher-training materials and early childhood curriculum material that reflects positive race-related values (House of Commons, 1984). Cardinal Carter's report also encouraged teaching understanding of diverse peoples and communities early in elementary and high schools (Carter, 1979).

Stephen Lewis's *Report on Race Relations in Ontario* recommended revising the curriculum to better reflect the dynamics of Ontario's multicultural society. Looking further to post-secondary education, he recommended that the ministers of education and colleges and universities review admission requirements to Ontario faculties of education to ensure that they are attracting and enrolling qualified visible minority candidates. He also suggested that the Minister of Colleges and Universities ensure that the governing boards of colleges and universities reflect the changed society of Ontario. Further, he recommended that the minister consider a race-relations policy previously proposed by the Council of Regents of the Community College system, as a model for post-secondary institutions (Lewis, S., 1992).

F. Governance

17. Create a directorate and Cabinet committee on race relations.

The Ubale report proposed an institutional framework for a comprehensive attack on race relations problems that would require cooperation among all levels of government and more community involvement in planning and decision-making (Ubale, 1977). Fifteen years later, and noting the Cabinet Committee on Race Relations, which had operated in Ontario from 1979 to 1990, Stephen Lewis recommended that a Cabinet committee on race relations be once again formed, chaired by the then Minister of Citizenship. In his model, the Cabinet committee would meet four times a year with a group of people from visible minority communities who would help inform the committee's agenda (Lewis, S., 1992).

The Royal Commission on the Donald Marshall, Jr. Prosecution also recommended a Cabinet committee on race relations be established, to include the attorney general and solicitor general. It would meet regularly with representatives of visible minority communities to discuss issues related to race and the criminal justice system (Royal Commission on the Donald Marshall, Jr. Prosecution, 1989a).

Stephen Lewis recommended that the Ontario Anti-Racism Secretariat be converted into a freestanding Ontario Anti-Racism Directorate, which would report to the Minister of Citizenship and work with community groups. The directorate would serve as a secretariat for meetings and provide research and advice. It would also work with communities to formulate a community development design, which would incorporate previous recommendations and ideas that had not been implemented (Lewis, S., 1992).

In *Paying the Price: The Human Cost of Racial Profiling*, the Ontario Human Rights Commission recommended that the government establish a Racial Diversity Secretariat to report annually on issues of racism in Ontario. It would also report on the implementation of recommendations in previous reports related to racial profiling and to

Aboriginal peoples. The secretariat would influence and support the development of government policy to incorporate racial diversity and equity and engage in raising public awareness and education activities related to these issues (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2003).

2. Reports Addressing Aspects of Crime Prevention

All three orders of government, along with school boards and community groups, have studied and reported on crime prevention and youth development. As with the reports relating to racism and discrimination, we were again struck by the similarities in the recommendations. They urged focusing efforts outside the justice system and bringing to bear the coordinated efforts and resources of families, schools, communities, agencies and government. These reports are just the tip of an enormous iceberg. We examined and considered many more. The reports we chose to include here are illustrative rather than definitive.

This section provides a thematic overview of recommendations from key reports that addressed various aspects of crime prevention, youth development and other matters related to the mandate of our review. To illustrate this earlier work, we selected 27 reports:

Alberta's Crime Reduction and Safe Communities Task Force. (2007). *Keeping Communities Safe: Report and Recommendations of Alberta's Crime Reduction and Safe Communities Task Force*. Edmonton: Government of Alberta

Canadian Criminal Justice Association. (1989). *Safer Communities: A Social Strategy for Crime Prevention in Canada*. Canadian Journal of Criminology, 31(August), 4-23.

Cooke, D. and J. Finlay. (2007). *Office of Child and Family Advocacy Review of Open Detention and Open Custody in Ontario*. Toronto: Government of Ontario

Joyette, D. and M. Oda. (2005). *Black Creek West Community Capacity Building Project: Phase III Towards Resource & Capacity Development Action Plan*. Toronto: Joyette Consulting Services.

Ma, Stephanie J. (2004). *Just Listen to Me: Youth Voices on Violence*. Toronto: Government of Ontario Office of Child and Family Service Advocacy.

National Crime Prevention Centre. (2000a). *Policy Framework for Addressing Crime Prevention and Children Ages 0 to 12*.

———. (2000b). *Policy Framework for Addressing Crime Prevention and Youth Ages 12 to 18.*

National Crime Prevention Council. (1995). *Clear Limits and Real Opportunities: The Keys to Preventing Youth Crimes.* Ottawa: Government of Canada.

———. (1997a). *Preventing Crime by Investing in Families. An Integrated Approach to Promote Positive Outcomes in Children.* Ottawa: Government of Canada.

———. (1997b). *Preventing Crime by Investing in Families. Promoting Positive Outcomes in Children Six to Twelve Years Old.* Ottawa: Government of Canada.

———. (1997c). *Preventing Crime by Investing in Families and Communities Promoting Positive Outcomes in Youth Twelve to Eighteen Years Old.* Ottawa: Government of Canada.

——— Economic Analysis Committee. (1996). *Money Well Spent: Investing in Preventing Crime.* Ottawa: Government of Canada.

——— Youth Justice Committee. (1995). *Mobilizing Political Will and Community Responsibility to Prevent Youth Crime.* Ottawa: Government of Canada.

Nova Scotia. (2007). *Our Kids Are Worth It – Strategy for Children and Youth.* Halifax: Government of Nova Scotia.

Nova Scotia. Department of Justice, Policy, Planning and Research. (2006). *Perspectives on Youth Crime in Nova Scotia.* Halifax: Government of Nova Scotia.

Nunn, M. (2006). *Spiralling Out of Control: Lessons Learned From a Boy in Trouble.* Report of the Nunn Commission of Inquiry. Halifax: Government of Nova Scotia.

Office for Children, Youth and Family Support. (2004). *Action Plan for Young People.* Canberra: Australian Capital Territory

Region of Peel Public Health. (2006). *Peel Youth Violence Prevention: Toward a Bright Future.* Brampton: Region of Peel.

Safe Cities for Youth: A Culture of Smart Choices. (2007, December 3). Conference report. Department of Justice Canada, City of Toronto. University of Toronto, Toronto.

School Community Safety Advisory Panel. (2008). *The Road to Health: A Final Report on School Safety*. Toronto: Toronto District School Board.

Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General. (1993). *Crime Prevention in Canada: Toward a National Strategy*. Twelfth Report of the Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General. Ottawa: Government of Canada.

Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology. (2006). *Out of the Shadows at Last. Transforming Mental Health, Mental Illness, and Addiction Services in Canada*. Ottawa: Senate of Canada.

The Griffin Centre. (2005). *Jane Finch Neighbourhood Action Plan Report*. Toronto: City of Toronto.

Toronto District School Board Task Force on Safe and Compassionate Schools. (2004). *Report: Task Force on Safe and Compassionate Schools*. Toronto: Toronto District School Board (The Falconer report).

Tymchak, M. and Saskatchewan Instructional Development and Research Unit. (2001). *Toward a New School, Community and Human Service Partnership in Saskatchewan*. Final Report of the Task Force and Public Dialogue on the Role of the School to the Minister of Education of Saskatchewan. Regina: Government of Saskatchewan.

Warner, R. and Grassroots Youth Collaborative. (2005). *Youth on Youth: Grassroots Youth Collaborative on Youth-led Organizing in the City of Toronto*. Toronto: Grassroots Youth Collaborative.

Youth Networking Forum. (2006, January 20). Conference report. City of Toronto. City Hall, Toronto.

While these reports cover an enormous range of important issues, we found within them 18 themes of particular relevance to our work. For ease of reference, we have grouped them into six general categories:

A. Overall observations:

    1. An overall strategy that links interventions across departments is required.

2. Collaboration across disciplines and sectors must be strengthened to avoid fragmentation.

3. The criminal justice system can't do it all; programs must be multidisciplinary.

4. The focus needs to be on crime prevention.

5. Programs require stable long-term funding to be effective.

B. Eliminate child and family poverty:

6. Focus on children/youth and their families who are living in conditions of multiple risk.

C. Early interventions:

7. Establish or expand "head start" programs.

8. Focus on early identification of difficulties and intervention.

9. Access to mental health treatment is critical.

D. Involving family and community:

10. Improve parenting skills.

11. Programs must be created by and for the community.

12. There is a need for community partnerships.

13. Expand availability of public space and facilities.

E. The education system:

14. Use multidisciplinary service teams in schools.

15. Ensure that suspended students have access to professionals beyond the classroom teacher.

F. Youth engagement and youth helping youth:

16. Involve youth in planning and implementing solutions to problems.

17. Support peer mentoring.

A. Overall observations

The first three groups of observations below are all related.

1. An overall strategy that links interventions across departments is required.

Numerous reports made the point that an overall strategy is required to address crime prevention and social development. The Horner Report (Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General, 1993) called for a national crime prevention policy based on the following principles: (1) Crime prevention should be included in the mandates of multiple federal departments, including justice, immigration, housing and social and economic development departments; (2) All levels of government must work together; priorities for crime prevention are best determined at the local level; (3) A multidisciplinary effort to address root causes of crime is required; and (4) Prevention measures include law enforcement, community-based policing, social development and the reduction of criminal opportunities. Subsequently, the National Crime Prevention Centre (formerly Council) (NCPC) developed policy frameworks in two papers (NCPC 2000a, NPPC, 2000b), for crime prevention for children and youth of different age levels. The following were some of their key guiding principles:

- Focus on children, youth and their families that are living in conditions of multiple risk.
- Recognize and reflect difference and diversity among youth, their families and their communities.
- Engage children at risk, youth, their families and the community in the process.
- Strengthen collaboration across disciplines and sectors.
- Link with other frameworks, strategies or mechanisms that can contribute to optimum social development of children and youth.

In its 1997 paper *Preventing Crime by Investing in Families* (NCPC, 1997a), the NCPC proposes that local, provincial and federal governments develop a comprehensive crime prevention strategy involving educational, social and health services, police, courts and corrections.

The 2007 report of Alberta's Crime Reduction and Safe Communities Task Force recommended that the Province establish a comprehensive, longer-term crime reduction and prevention strategy, coordinated and supported by a dedicated responsibility centre within the provincial government. Such a strategy would give focus to many of the initiatives already underway in the province and help coordinate actions across the various provincial government departments and public sector organizations.

The Nunn Commission (Nunn, 2006) recommends that Nova Scotia develop a comprehensive strategy to coordinate its programs, interventions, services and supports to children and youth at risk and their families. The Province has done so, in its 2007 report, *Our Kids Are Worth It — Strategy for Children and Youth* (Nova Scotia, 2007).

2. Collaboration across disciplines and sectors must be strengthened to avoid fragmentation.

Several reports have noted that this is a key gap in addressing crime prevention. In its Policy Framework papers (NCPC, 2000a and NCPC, 2000b), the NCPC calls for this to be a key guiding principle of any crime prevention strategy.

The Alberta report (Alberta's Crime Reduction and Safe Communities Task Force, 2007) recommended that the use of multidisciplinary teams to address crises in communities be expanded.

The Nova Scotia government reports (Nova Scotia Department of Justice, 2006 and Nova Scotia, 2007) emphasize this need to strengthen collaboration. One of the key directions in *Our Kids Are Worth It* is "Co-ordinate Programs, Services."

The 2001 report of the Saskatchewan Task Force and Public Dialogue on the Role of the School recommended that Cabinet recognize the lack of coordination created by the different geographical boundaries used by various human services agencies — and do whatever is required to remedy this. While its report dealt with schools, the same issues of lack of collaboration across disciplines caused the task force to recommend that the responsibility for School^{PLUS} (an integrated service model for schools) belong to all human services departments, including social services, health, justice and education, as well as their agencies and community organizations.

The Australian Capital Territory, *Blueprint for Young People "at Risk" 2004-2008* (part of the *Action Plan for Young People*) has a three-pronged approach, one being to provide improved coordinated assistance. For them, the collaboration extends to the need for common case management approaches across ACT, government and community organizations.

3. The criminal justice system can't do it all; programs must be multidisciplinary.

Even before the NCPC reports in 1995 (NCPC, 1995 and NCPC, Youth Justice Committee 1995), there was a recognition that the criminal justice system is not going to solve all of the problems underlying crime. Justice system policies and programs must be tied to other social policies and programs. There must be multidisciplinary efforts. These two reports in fact found that the criminal justice system was being used inappropriately to deal with health and social problems. These reports also speak of the need for a constellation of programs to solve the issues at hand.

In its policy framework reports (NCPC, 2000a and NCPC, 2000b) the NCPC notes that other policy areas also have a role to play in addressing crime prevention, including health, social, housing and the economy.

In its report *Preventing Crime by Investing in Families* (NCPC, 1997a), the NCPC goes further, emphasizing that initiatives must offer support across the major systems of influence in a child's life: family, school and community.

Both the 1993 report of the Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General (the Horner Report) and the Nova Scotia government reports (Nova Scotia Department of Justice, 2006 and Nova Scotia, 2007) note that crime and the causes of crime must be addressed. The justice system alone cannot address youth crime. A consistent and coordinated multi-systemic approach is needed.

4. The focus needs to be on crime prevention.

The majority of the reports reviewed called for an emphasis on crime prevention, as opposed to modifying the criminal justice system. The NCPC (NCPC, 1997a), noting that detection, deterrence and detention are very expensive, called for a focus on crime prevention to make meaningful reductions in human suffering and loss, community victimization, and dollars spent on services for young offenders and their families.

The Alberta report (Alberta's Crime Reduction and Safe Communities Task Force, 2007) notes that not enough is being done to prevent crime. Starting young and addressing the factors that put children and youth at risk is a proven strategy that will secure the best results in the longer term.

5. Programs require stable long-term funding to be effective.

One of the keys to effective interventions, as noted in the 1995 NCPC reports (NCPC, 1995 and NCPC, Youth Justice Committee, 1995) is continuity. To be effective, programs must have stable long-term funding.

The Alberta report (Alberta's Crime Reduction and Safe Communities Task Force, 2007) recommends that three-year provincial funding be provided for community-based social agencies with proven outcomes to stop the annual funding cycle, which requires substantial resources every year to apply for funding.

Perspectives on Youth Crime in Nova Scotia (Nova Scotia Department of Justice, 2006) supports this, noting that many crime prevention activities require long-term investments before results can be seen.

The importance of stable funding is also noted in several of the community reports, most notably Griffin Centre (2005), Joyette (2005) and Warner (2005).

B. Eliminate child and family poverty

1. Focus on children/youth and their families that are living in conditions of multiple risk.

In the NCPC's 1997 reports (NCPC, 1997a, NCPC, 1997b and NCPC, 1997c), it notes that a crime prevention strategy must address child poverty. It states that many youth now described as "repeat offenders" have often been "repeat victims" as children. Further, it is the combination of risk factors that children and youth experience, especially if these factors are multiple, persistent and not balanced by protective factors, that lead to negative outcomes. In its policy framework reports (NCPC, 2000a and NCPC, 2000b), the NCPC has as a key guiding principle that any strategy must focus on children and youth and their families who are living in conditions of multiple risk.

These thoughts were echoed in many reports, including *Perspectives on Youth Crime in Nova Scotia,* which added that programs that involve families are more effective than those that do not. Although limiting its solution to targeted pilot projects, the Alberta report noted that services should "wrap around" the families, providing a wide range of targeted programs and services to meet their needs.

C. Early interventions

Numerous reports recognize the importance of early interventions, going back to before a child is born. As the NCPC noted (NCPC, Youth Justice Committee, 1995), approaches that work emphasize early prevention and intervention.

1. Establish or expand "head start" programs.

These programs often involve home visits to parents and babies, especially those living in conditions of risk. The NCPC notes (NCPC, 1997a) that the most effective programs take services to the family, and that these types of programs have been successful in decreasing parental isolation and improving outcomes for children.

The Nova Scotia government reports (Nova Scotia Department of Justice, 2006 and Nova Scotia, 2007) note that these programs work and have emphasized them as one of five key directions, calling it "Build a Strong Foundation."

2. Focus on early identification of difficulties and intervention.

The NCPC (NCPC, 2000a and NCPC, 2000b) notes that the earlier the identification of problems and referrals for treatment, the better the outcomes for children, particularly if the approaches used are sensitive to the cultural, ethnic, linguistic and other key characteristics of the families and communities. Other reports also support these statements, including the Nova Scotia government reports (Nova Scotia Department of Justice, 2006 and Nova Scotia, 2007), which have "Identify Problems, Help Early" as one of the five key directions. The Australian report (Office for Children, Youth and Family Support, 2004) notes that these interventions are important to help minimize the number of young people "in risk" in the future.

3. Access to mental health treatment is critical.

The importance of access to mental health treatment is emphasized in several reports, in particular in the 2006 report of the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology (the Kirby Report). Kirby notes that the current system is overburdened by a shortage of psychiatric specialists, psychologists, nurses and social workers in the area of child and youth mental health and recommends that governments address the problem. Given this shortage, and the amount of time it takes to increase the capacity in the system, the report recommends the use of tele-psychiatry (especially for under-serviced regions); alternative treatment models, such as group therapy (where clinically appropriate); and case conferencing to bridge the gap during a period of restructuring to enhance the mental health system's ability to assist children and youth.

The Kirby report also makes important recommendations regarding age cut-offs for programs and transitions from youth to adult services. These include that age cut-offs for services be based on clinical and not budgetary or other bureaucratic considerations, that services for children and youth be linked to adult services to ensure seamless transition, and that gaps where individuals are ineligible for treatment in either system be avoided.

The Alberta report (Alberta's Crime Reduction and Safe Communities Task Force, 2007) reiterates this, recommending that at-risk children, youth and young adults have access to full-time, longer-term, intense treatment for addictions and mental illnesses. It further recommends that treatment be expanded to include young adults up to the age of 22.

One of the Nova Scotia reports (Nova Scotia Department of Justice, 2006) notes the need to address waiting lists for mental health treatment and proposes a two-pronged approach – the use of tele-health and a team approach.

D. Involving family and community

1. Improve parenting skills.

In its reports on preventing crime by investing in families (NCPC 1997a, NCPC, 1997b, and NCPC, 1997c), the NCPC notes that children and youth need responsive, involved parents, who provide competent parenting. It also notes that skills training has been shown to be an effective way of promoting good parenting. In 1997a, the NCPC notes that the types of supports provided will depend on the age range of the children. Furthermore, it states community-based supports are best.

One of the Nova Scotia reports (Nova Scotia Department of Justice, 2006) notes that there is a gap in assisting parents when home visit programs end (usually at age three in that province) so it is testing a Parenting Journey Program that will extend supports until a child is 16.

Several of the community reports highlight the need for initiatives to develop better parenting skills, most notably Region of Peel Public Health (2006) and The Griffin Centre (2005).

2. Programs must be created by and for the community.

The 1995 NCPC reports note that effective prevention must encourage parents, other family members, neighbours and community members to get involved. They also suggest that community ownership is essential; a cookie-cutter approach will not work. The NCPC notes, however (NCPC, 2000b), that not all communities are at the same level of development and so different approaches to infrastructure development, capacity building, development and implementation are needed.

In its policy framework papers (NCPC, 2000a and NCPC, 2000b), the NCPC proposes, as a key pillar of any crime prevention policy framework, community engagement and sustained participation.

The Australian report (Office for Children, Youth and Family Support, 2004) sees the development of joint government and community initiatives as a way of strengthening outcomes for young people. This point was stressed in all the community reports.

3. There is a need for community partnerships.

This is stressed in many reports, in particular the community reports. The Alberta report (Alberta's Crime Reduction and Safe Communities Task Force, 2007) notes that the best solutions to crime issues come when communities and community agencies work together to tackle neighbourhood issues and make community safety a priority.

4. Expand availability of public space and facilities.

The NCPC (NCPC, 1997b) notes the availability of space for all types of recreation is an important resource for communities.

The Saskatchewan report (Tymchak and Saskatchewan Instructional Development and Research Unit, 2001) recommends that the government authorize the principle that all services for children and youth in the province be delivered in an integrated, school-linked environment that is, where possible, school-based.

The Australian Capital Territory *Young People's Plan* (part of Office for Children, Youth and Family Support, 2004) includes four key directions, one of which is "Access." A key priority under this direction is increasing young people's access to public space.

Several of the community reports address the issue of space. The Peel report (Region of Peel Public Health, 2006), for example, highlights the use of school space after hours, as well as a need to promote the use of under-used facilities.

The report of the School Community Safety Advisory Panel (chaired by Julian Falconer) recommends that selected schools in a school board should be designated as community hubs.

E. The education system

1. Use multidisciplinary service teams in schools.

There are two aspects to these recommendations: one is that services be offered during the school day; the other is that services for children and youth be delivered in an integrated environment (as recommended by the NCPC in 1995) and perhaps school-based (as recommended in the Saskatchewan report, 2001).

The Horner report (Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General, 1993) recommends the establishment of school-based teams, including social workers, child/youth workers and teachers, to help families navigate and access mental health services, and also that the mental health services for children and youth be provided in the school setting.

The *Report: Task Force on Safe and Compassionate Schools*, prepared for the Toronto District School Board in 2004, recommends a reinstatement of a variety of support workers in schools, including child care workers, youth support workers, community liaison workers and educational assistants.

Most recently, the Falconer report (School Community Safety Advisory Panel, 2008) recommends that the TDSB establish school-based teams to help family caregivers navigate and access mental health services for youth. Additionally, this report recommends that schools with high suspension/expulsion/drop-out/absenteeism rates have full-time social workers, child and youth workers, and child and youth counsellors and that youth counsellors be dedicated to high-priority schools. Finally, the board should provide "wrap-around" programming in schools with a large number of students at risk of falling outside of the education system.

2. Ensure that suspended students have access to professionals beyond the classroom teacher.

The Nunn Commission (Nunn, 2006) recommends that adequate space, staff and programs be provided for in-school alternatives to out-of-school suspensions.

The Task Force on Safe and Compassionate Schools (Toronto District School Board, 2004) recommends that appropriate mandatory programs be developed for suspended and expelled students.

The issue of school suspensions was also addressed in several of the community reports.

The Falconer report (School Community Safety Advisory Panel, 2008) recommends that, upon a student's second suspension, a multidisciplinary team meet with the student and their parents to determine whether the student requires alternative education measures and/or counselling.

F. Youth Engagement

1. Involve youth in planning and implementing solutions to problems

The 1995 NCPC reports noted that to promote the responsibility, involvement and integration of young people, youth must be involved in the planning and, where possible, in the implementation of actual approaches developed to prevent youth crime. Youth need a voice in what happens to them — and need a chance to be part of the solution.

In its policy framework papers (NCPC, 2000a and NCPC, 2000b), the NCPC calls for the participation of youth in the process, including youth in or leaving care.

The Nova Scotia report *Our Kids Are Worth It* (Nova Scotia, 2007) notes that young people must have a voice and be involved in the planning, delivery and evaluation of programs and services affecting them. "Engage Youth, Promote Shared Accountability" is one of the key directions of this strategy.

A key direction for the Australian Capital Territory's *Young People's Plan* is "Participation." Key priorities under this include increasing young people's involvement in government and in the development and evaluation of programs and services designed to meet their needs.

Most of the community reports (e.g., Region of Peel Public Health, 2006, The Griffin Centre, 2005, Youth Networking Forum, 2006, *Safe Cities for Youth: A Culture of Smart Choices*, 2007, and Ma, 2004) highlight the need to get youth involved, including through participation in government, volunteerism and youth-led initiatives.

The Falconer report (School Community Safety Advisory Panel, 2008) recommends that school boards, legislators and educators develop mechanisms to encourage meaningful youth participation in the creation of safe school environments and to elevate the voice of children and youth in the school, in accordance with Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

2. Support peer mentoring.

Several reports emphasize the importance of peer mentoring as a way of helping youth form positive attachments and supportive environments. These include the NCPC (1997c) and several of the community reports (Youth Networking Forum, 2006 and The Griffin Centre, 2005). The Falconer report (School Community Safety Advisory Panel, 2008) recommends that the TDSB implement a peer-based education program, supervised and supported by teachers, youth and social workers.

Chapter 7:

Where the Roots Are Most Prevalent:

Towards a Place-Based Approach

Introduction

Many of the reports outlined in the previous chapter, along with the roots discussed in Chapter 3 and, perhaps most significantly, the devastating trends identified in Chapter 5, point to the central role of disadvantaged neighbourhoods as fertile fields for the roots of violence involving youth. In this chapter, we will outline the ways in which a place-based approach, firmly anchored in neighbourhood strengths and assets, is accordingly a core and essential part of any strategy to address those roots.

We will begin with a brief overview of the kind of place-based approach we believe is most appropriate in this specific context. We will next consider two leading examples of such approaches, one in Britain and one in Ontario, and then outline a methodology by which to determine the areas in Ontario that could most benefit from a place-based approach. We then conclude this chapter with a note on a process to consider the applicability of our approach to First Nations communities.

The Rationale for a Place-Based Approach

While there are many theoretical models for place-based approaches, the one that best applies here looks at the many roots of violence through a spatial lens to consider how those roots manifest themselves in a particular physical place: a neighbourhood. It looks at the local sources of the roots (concentrations of poverty, manifestations of racism, family issues, transportation concerns and lack of space for play or gathering, for example) and goes on to assess what is already being done in that place to address them. It moves from these analyses to consider all the local strengths that can be brought to bear on the roots and to develop a local plan to do so, and then relies as much as possible on local residents for the implementation of that plan as well as its development.

Pivotal as this approach can be, we preface our discussion of it by noting that its use does not replace the need to deploy broader instruments of public policy to address the roots wherever they arise. While particularly devastating where they combine in a physical place, the roots identified in Chapter 3 can grow anywhere, and must be addressed wherever they do. What the place-based approach offers is a way to ensure that the broader strategy of which it is an essential part can deliver the intended results where their impact is most needed. It adds complementary local initiatives and assists with the targeting of the broader ones. For example, among the many universally applicable responses to the level of poverty is an increase in the minimum wage. A complementary local strategy would be a job-readiness program tailored to the educational and language issues in a neighbourhood and initiatives to bring employment opportunities to it.

Although used to good effect elsewhere, the place-based concept has been slow to arrive in Canada. The typical approach of provincial and federal governments remains to identify a provincial or national priority, develop a program and a service delivery model, and then either provide the service or contract out its provision in accordance with standards set by the government. While there is some experience with regional approaches, and some evidence of support for the place-based initiatives of municipal governments, the paradigm remains centrally driven universality.

There are, of course, a number of issues of broad social and economic policy where this approach remains appropriate. But for those issues that intrinsically anchor in a geographically defined place it seems clear that place-based responses must be part of any successful approach to address them.

There is growing recognition of this in Canada at the policy level. We note, for example, that a report by the External Advisory Committee on Cities and Communities recommended that all governments adopt a place-based approach to policy-making to help achieve more broadly based outcome goals. That committee, which reported to the Prime Minister in June 2006, included senior and experienced members from every province.

As well, in our particular context, it is noteworthy that a discussion paper published for the Canadian Policy Research Networks argued that a properly designed and implemented place-based policy can help governments meet challenges and opportunities in urban neighbourhoods with high concentrations of poverty. That paper noted that Britain, Europe and the United States had started earlier on place-based approaches to neighbourhood revitalization, and observed that Canada was ready to move forward with this approach (Bradford, 2005).

Part of the rationale for this is found in a recent paper entitled *Asset-based, Resident-led Neighbourhood Development*, written by Eric Leviten-Reid for the Caledon Institute of Social Policy. That paper described the place-based approach as follows:

> It is, in effect, a prevention strategy through which various government agencies can collaborate in addressing 'risk factors where they are joined, upstream,' rather than contending separately with a series of even more difficult challenges 'at the tributaries downstream'.... In part, the growing attention to 'place-based development' and 'place-based public policy' reflects a growing appreciation of the unique significance of local settings: localities are where diverse factors come together to generate either positive or negative effects. (Leviten-Reid, 2006: 4; quotations from Bulthuis and Leviten-Reid, 2005).

In another Caledon Institute paper, *Final Reflections from the Action for Neighbourhood Change Research Project*, Cheryl Gorman put the case for a place-based approach this way:

> There are three intertwined qualities embedded in [the principle of asset-based, resident-led neighbourhood development]. First, all neighbourhoods have individual and collective assets that can be strengthened and enhanced. Second, resident engagement is integral to the process and outcome of interventions. Sustainable progress toward neighbourhood vitality requires that issues chosen for intervention be resident-led. Finally, place-based development reflects a growing understanding that local settings present unique factors, which interact in a complex way to generate positive effects — like innovation and resilience, as well as negative effects, such as poverty (Gorman, 2007: 7).

And, in a January 2008 publication entitled *New Deal for Communities: A Synthesis of New Program-Wide Evidence: 2006-07*, researchers at Sheffield Hallam University added another important long-range benefit to the above rationales for a place-based approach, noting:

> Evidence from [the New Deal for Communities] evaluation generally supports the view that in the longer run interventions in one outcome area are likely to reap benefits across a range of other outcome areas. This provides a rationale, and support, for area-based urban regeneration schemes, which adopt multi-outcome interventions and targets (Beatty et al., 2008: 51).

Our Approach

These perspectives, and in particular the situation we describe in Chapter 5, led us to strongly favour having a place-based approach as a core part of Ontario's strategy to address the roots of violence involving youth. We see such an approach as being based on the following key rationales and elements:

1. Focusing on the Roots of Violence Involving Youth

Limited resources must be put where they will have the biggest impact on the roots of violence involving youth. In that connection, we have taken note of two additional perspectives on the importance of place specifically in relation to violence involving youth. First, a very helpful paper commissioned for us by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services includes the following observation:

> The links to youth violence in [the context of rural and urban settings] rest on the youth's perception on the degree of safety, social stability and social cohesion that exists within the immediate community. Transient communities, communities where there is a high level of openly expressed violence and communities where there is not a shared appreciation for academic or vocational attainment are perceived as less stable and more threatening. Locating where a youth lives can influence the extent to which they experience both mental health and violent outcomes (Leschied, 2007: 5).

Similarly, in a review of the literature on the social disorganization theory of the sources of crime, published in Volume 5, Prof. Scot Wortley concluded as follows:

> Social disorganization theory suggests that public spending and private investment must be concentrated in the most impoverished areas… [it] suggests that money be spent mainly on programs physically located in underclass neighbourhoods, run by people with ties to the neighbourhoods they intend to serve. [This targets] programs for the underclass while also strengthening minority agencies or creating new agencies within very poor neighbourhoods.

In our context, this means that the areas where multiple roots intertwine to generate the immediate risk factors must be identified and given priority in order to make the largest structural and most sustainable impacts on the roots.

2. Asset-Based

This involves looking in each neighbourhood to determine what is working already, and to find and support local sources of strength. Those sources may be municipalities, individuals, organizations, programs or institutions. What is important is that the operating orientation not be to simply focus on naming problems, but rather on finding, supporting and building on strengths.

Supporting those local assets is not only key to making short-term progress on addressing the roots, but also has longer-term benefits. In Eric Leviten-Reid's paper, he notes the powerful long-term impacts of so doing:

> Moreover, like great cities, healthy neighbourhoods are those that are able to sustain a development over time. They do this by building a stockpile of assets they can use to generate income, weather hard times and innovate in response to changing circumstances. More than just financial or physical, such assets are cultural (ways of thinking and acting) and social (connections with others) as well. By developing a critical mass of assets in these different areas, neighbourhoods are able to meet their needs and aspirations on an ongoing basis (Leviten-Reid, 2006: 4).

3. Tailoring

Adopting a place-based approach also means working locally to identify what methods work best in each given community to address a given issue. Addressing the roots of violence involving youth requires understanding the particular constellation of issues affecting a neighbourhood and its capacities and strengths, and then providing the flexibility to adapt broader policies and programs to these local circumstances and their unique intersections.

4. Community Building

If local problems are to be addressed on local turf, and if solutions are to grow out of local strengths, it follows that residents and local agencies must have significant roles in setting policies and priorities. Both the process of working towards that goal and its results will bring individuals together to strengthen the local social fabric in innumerable ways. This then leads to the stronger community itself reducing the impact of the roots while beginning to remove them. Enabling communities to take positive actions to make their neighbourhood a better place to live can in these ways lead to a "virtuous cycle" where community action reduces the impact of the roots of violence as the community assumes more responsibility locally. More responsibility results in stronger commitment and engagement, improved targeting efforts and a stronger social fabric in a continuous, positive cycle.

5. Collaborative

To achieve the benefits of a place-based approach in a particular neighbourhood, governments must collaborate with each other and with those neighbourhoods. As we will explore in Chapter 9, the place-based approach both requires and facilitates collaboration among governments and with communities in ways that get the greatest value from the initiatives and assets of each.

Conclusion

It is clear to us that many of the circumstances that can lead to the immediate risk factors for violence involving youth — the roots of such violence — grow and are nurtured in specific places. High concentrations of people living in poverty, substandard housing, poor design, limited public services, few stores or businesses, restricted transportation and employment options, few positive role models or mentors, and other roots, all frequently coalesce in identifiable neighbourhoods. Where this happens, these individual roots interact to dramatically magnify the negative impact each can have.

Not only do place-based approaches respond directly to the very local nature of these interactions in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, but also they have a galvanizing effect on all who are in a position to advance such an initiative. They capture the imagination of those positioned to help by providing an opportunity to work at an understandable scale and to achieve results that can be seen and felt, not just observed in abstract statistics. They obtain local buy-in, bring people together and promote cohesion as they address the roots because they feature and support local initiatives based on local circumstances and priorities, and because they bring residents to the core of the solution rather than leaving them on the margins as service-recipients or clients.

Examples of Place-Based Approaches

1. England's Place-Based Approach

Since at least the 1970s, disadvantaged neighbourhoods in England have been identified for particular attention in various national initiatives. This led in 2001 to a highly significant new policy, in which concerted efforts across a range of national government departments have been brought to bear on 88 local authorities with high concentrations of disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

A paper presented to us in London by staff from the Department for Communities and Local Government, and many discussions there, provided a very helpful overview of this long-term and complex strategy. We will draw on that information in the very brief summary we offer here.

Known as "A New Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal," the 2001 National Strategy Action Plan aims to narrow the gap between outcomes in deprived areas compared to the rest of the country. The strategy combines initiatives to link up action at the national level to improve the quality of public services in deprived areas with a suite of time-limited funds and programs to develop and mainstream best practices in neighbourhood renewal.

The strategy was designed at the national level, albeit in a highly collaborative way, but in practice it requires resident involvement in all stages of the process. There are three key dimensions:

- New national policies, funding and targets
- New ideas to empower communities and join up
- New structures to provide national and regional leadership

We were deeply impressed by the scope of this place-based policy initiative. Among many other elements, it included the publication at the launch in 2001 of 105 specific commitments by national government departments to address the situation in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. These ranged from economic and tax measures to child care, transportation, anti-racism, school exclusion, governance and many other initiatives. Each identified the responsible departments and included a timeline, ranging from months to 15-20 years. What is key for our purposes is that numerous departments were required to consider how they could contribute to a place-based approach as part of their mainstream budgets and programs, not just through short-term special projects, with their commitments then being made public.

As it was implemented, the strategy provided a cross-departmental and place-based approach to empowering residents and getting public, private and voluntary organizations to work in partnership to address community capacity and involvement in its central policies. Those policies aim to reduce worklessness and crime, to have better health, skills, housing and physical environments, and to narrow the gap on these measures between outcomes in deprived areas and the rest of the country. Core features included:

- Putting the challenges of the country's most distressed neighbourhoods on a national policy agenda
- Fostering collaboration among government departments
- Reinstating local governments as leading partners in urban policy, and
- Giving an increased role to community residents in local decision-making.

Overall, the initiative linked the areas of housing and the environment, education and employment, and health and safety with the underlying goal of improving the management of resources within neighbourhoods through resident participation and strengthening communities.

To support and coordinate the strategy, the government established the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit, which worked with regionally based government neighbourhood renewal teams to maintain a flow of knowledge between local partnerships and government departments. That unit reported to the deputy prime minister and had the benefit of a cross-departmental steering committee composed of permanent secretaries (deputy ministers).

Given the centrality of racism to our own focus in Ontario, it is noteworthy that the unit worked with an external Race Equity Advisory Group to implement a Race Equality Action Plan as a core part of the initiative. Indicators in England had shown that some 70 per cent of Black and minority ethnic individuals lived in the deprived areas. The action plan signalled that race equality would be an integral part of the neighbourhood renewal strategy.

The hallmarks of the plan included expectations that the needs of diverse communities would be met through measures that included the employment of Blacks and minority ethnics in the central and local units; their representation on neighbourhood decision-making bodies; and outcome measures, including improvements in their participation in employment, achievement in school, health care access and other key areas.

To advance the strategy overall, the government also created Local Strategic Partnerships with the local authorities (municipalities), community agencies and residents. These partnerships (discussed in more detail in Chapter 9) connected local funding priorities with national polices by identifying urban neighbourhoods in need of assistance, helping them form a plan and arranging necessary service agreements with other organizations.

The national government also provided significant funding to help the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods improve core public services. This funding was not restricted to a particular activity, but the recipient had to be part of a local strategic partnership and have developed an agreed-upon local neighbourhood renewal strategy. The funds had to include a focus on tackling deprivation. Funds were also provided to support community involvement in the local strategic partnerships and for grants for community organizations in deprived areas.

What is interesting for our purposes is the scale of this initiative and the way that the national government focused policy attention and public resources on specific places across the country: the deprived neighbourhoods. Through a process we will discuss later in this chapter, it identified the most deprived neighbourhoods, then focused attention and resources on the 88 local authorities that had the largest numbers of those neighbourhoods. While the strategy has shifted in the last year or two towards one that focuses more on worklessness than on the other original outcomes, the neighbourhood focus remains, with 65 local authorities now targeted for special attention in relation to worklessness.

While a formal evaluation is not yet available, we were advised that the evidence so far shows that the gap between deprived neighbourhoods and the average has closed in several fields, most notably in community safety. The slowest change has been in health outcomes and employment outcomes, especially for minority groups. It is significant that, while the government in England has accordingly now moved its emphasis to worklessness, it has maintained the neighbourhood focus. As well, at the core of Britain's national governance structure, there is ever-increasing reliance on the local strategic partnerships, which are integral to the neighbourhood strategy, suggesting that the national government continues to view this place-based approach as having positive impacts on the ground.

Certainly, Canadian observers have drawn positive conclusions. In a February 2007 discussion paper, the Toronto City Summit Alliance noted the following:

> In Europe, many governments have responded with strategies aimed at building their troubled neighbourhoods and redressing the social exclusion they represent. Nowhere is this more evident than in Great Britain, where the government launched an all-out campaign to revitalize its troubled neighbourhoods in 2001.... Results after four years show progress on most fronts and have led a number of state governments in Australia, such as Queensland and Victoria, to adopt similar targeted neighbourhood strategies aimed at revitalizing distressed neighbourhoods (Toronto City Summit Alliance, 2007: 3).

2. Toronto's Place-Based Approach

Closer to home, the City of Toronto has led the way in Canada in adopting a place-based approach. The city's approach had its origins in work done by the Strong Neighbourhoods Task Force, which the city established in 2004 with the United Way, in response to the community infrastructure challenges identified by the Toronto City Summit Alliance.

The task force brought together private, labour and community sector leaders, as well as representatives from the City of Toronto, and the governments of Ontario and Canada. It worked to understand the conditions that both strengthen and weaken neighbourhoods, the indicators of community stress and the scope of community service infrastructure. The resulting strategy provides a mechanism whereby investment neighbourhoods can identify opportunities for improvements in the use of existing resources, and local knowledge can be used to identify program and policy barriers to creating strong neighbourhoods.

In its February 2007 discussion paper, the Toronto City Summit Alliance noted the progress since then, stating:

> The City of Toronto has made significant internal structural changes to enable it to better respond to the 13 priority neighbourhoods. Action Teams have been established in each of the neighbourhoods, comprising staff from all relevant city divisions. These are responsible for ensuring a coordinated city response to neighbourhood issues, to be achieved through targeted resources, better cross-sectoral linkages and new service partnerships (Toronto City Summit Alliance, 2007: 13).

As described by the City of Toronto itself, the initiative brings together in neighbourhood action teams staff working locally from city divisions and boards to address local needs, coordinate services and build community capacity. Each neighbourhood action team is facilitated by a community development officer and championed by a senior member of the city's staff, and works to build stronger, safer, healthier neighbourhoods in under-served communities.

The city describes its goal as to go beyond the old conversation of "who leads" to a new understanding of partnership and integration. More recently expanded into neighbourhood action partnerships, the initiative now gathers residents, governments, community agencies and businesses to create opportunities to improve communities. It guides neighbourhood investment and ensures that residents identify local needs and priorities, and have a seat at the table with other partners to collaborate and problem-solve to see that the neighbourhoods' needs are met. As described to us by the city:

> At its core, neighbourhood action is about building new service relationships that inspire systemic change and lead to a safer, more equitable city…[by working] in each priority neighbourhood to [coordinate and improve] service delivery to achieve community outcomes in youth employment, education and skill development; youth engagement; community and family support; and youth justice.

The potential for the galvanizing effects we referred to earlier is demonstrated by the Province's targeting of some Community Health Centre expansion to the priority neighbourhoods, funding new youth outreach workers in the priority neighbourhoods, and launching the Youth Challenge Fund to improve opportunities for youth living in these poorly served neighbourhoods. The federal government has also supported this place-based approach by targeting some of its initiatives, such as the Local Labour Market Partnerships and youth employment programs in these neighbourhoods.

That said, it has been difficult to integrate place-based strategies to assist Toronto's priority neighbourhoods to the same degree as has been possible in England. One key reason for this is that, unlike the national government there, the City of Toronto does not control most of the key drivers for investment in these areas and there is still little collaboration among the three levels of government on this place-based initiative.

Conclusion

The experience to date in Britain and in Ontario illustrates the value of looking at where improved services, facilities and collaboration can play a critical role in improving outcomes for a neighbourhood, and provides examples of how a place-based approach can be implemented to positive effect.

Identifying Places for a Place-Based Approach

Introduction

A first step in using a place-based approach to address the roots of violence involving youth is to identify where there are concentrations of disadvantage that nurture those roots. The process to identify these places must be objective and based on clear and appropriate criteria that resonate with communities. Once selected, the choices must be effectively communicated, along with a clear message that similar issues in other parts of the province are also being addressed through more generalized policies.

1. Identifying Disadvantaged Areas in England

Both the discussions we had and the background information we received in London provided us with a very useful overview of the English approach to this issue. We draw on both in setting out the following brief summary.

Since the 1970s, Great Britain has developed and continued to refine measures of multiple deprivation to help inform the targeting of its policies in a number of national policy areas, ranging from health and neighbourhood renewal to crime. The resulting measures, known as Indices of Multiple Deprivation, are produced for all local authorities.

The 2007 Index of Multiple Deprivation is made up of 33 indicators divided into seven domain indices. There are also supplementary indices on income deprivation affecting children and affecting older people. The seven domains in the main index relate to income deprivation, employment deprivation, health deprivation and disability, education skills and training deprivation, barriers to housing and services, living environment deprivation and crime.

Each of the seven domains contains a number of component indicators. For example, the health deprivation and disability domain looks at years of potential life lost, the comparative illness and disability ratio, measures of acute morbidity and the proportion of adults suffering from certain mental disorders. The sub-domain for children in the domain of education looks at average test scores of pupils at certain stages, the proportion of young people not staying in school, the secondary school absence rate and others.

The overall index is based on the idea that distinct dimensions of deprivation can be recognized and measured separately, but are experienced by individuals living in an area in linked ways. The concept is that multiple deprivation is a combination of different, though clearly interrelated, deprivations. For example, poor health may be related to inadequate housing or other factors linked to low income and is also a deprivation in its own right.

While, in 2000, the data were published at the ward (in very general terms, about 10,000 people) and local authority levels (again, in general terms, about 250,000 people), they are now also published at a unit of analysis of about 2,000 people. While not generally published at levels of analysis below that, the indices are now prepared at the level of even smaller areas, starting at 1,000 individuals (in Scotland the equivalent measure is based on areas with as few as 500 individuals). At whatever level of analysis, the data allow the government to rank all areas by their relative level of deprivation. Once this is done, the targeting of many programs follows based on that ranking.

The important lesson for us is that, while the specifics have varied over time, this approach has been used in England for more than three decades and is now an integral part of governance in that country.

2. Identifying Disadvantaged Areas in the City of Toronto

The city's approach to identifying priority neighbourhoods started by identifying areas where there were fewer public services than the norm. Once these had been identified, the city then looked to see where the impact of those inferior services would be felt the most. The premise was that the most disadvantaged individuals would have the greatest difficulty getting to services further away from their homes, or replacing public services with services they could afford to purchase themselves. Assuming that, in the long run, services should be more equitably available, the concentration of disadvantaged individuals in each under-serviced neighbourhood was used to set priorities for improving services.

This approach has the significant advantage of providing an easily understood rationale for selecting priority neighbourhoods, linked to both the level of services and the degree of need for them. This allowed the city to describe its assessment process as leading to "a clear method to determine where community investments are most immediately required."

Importantly, in looking at services, Toronto went further than simply listing services within the geographic boundaries of a neighbourhood to assess whether, as a practical matter, those facilities were actually available to residents. This involved looking beyond questions of proximity to also consider transportation issues, fees and the relevance to the particular neighbourhood of the programs being offered.

Eleven key services within Toronto's neighbourhoods were analyzed. These were recreation and community centres, libraries, schools, community health centres and hospitals, community-based children's services, community-based services for youth, community-based services for seniors, settlement services, community-based employment services, food banks, and community kitchens, gardens and markets.

For each of these services, the city analyzed whether they were near the residents who would need them most. For example, the distance of settlement services from recent immigrants in the neighbourhood was analyzed, as was the distance of youth services from neighbourhood youth aged 15-24.

Once areas with lesser access to services had been identified, the city then went to the second level of its analysis. That level considered 11 socio-economic measures within five domains to determine the degree of disadvantage facing each under-served neighbourhood. The domains were:

- Economic (median household income, percentage of population spending 30 per cent or more on shelter costs, percentage of population aged 25+ who are unemployed)
- Education (percentage of students passing the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test, percentage of population with college or university qualifications, percentage of population aged 15+ attaining less than Grade 9 education)
- Urban fabric (percentage of occupied private dwellings requiring major repairs)
- Health (number of low birth-weight babies per 1,000 live births)
- Demographics (percentage of population with no knowledge of English or French, percentage of population who are recent immigrants, percentage of population by mobility status one year ago)

These socio-economic indicators were then used with the service-level indicators and certain safety indicators to determine the priority neighbourhoods. As a result, Toronto now has a mechanism that not only considers socio-economic disadvantage, but as well a lack of services or other circumstances that make it appropriate to focus attention and priorities on certain communities. These open and transparent criteria link the resulting targeting directly to the policy goals the city seeks to advance.

3. Towards an Index of Relative Disadvantage for Ontario

To help us appreciate how relative disadvantage might be determined objectively on a provincewide basis, we commissioned a paper by Prof. Desmond Ellis of York University. In that paper, published in Volume 4, Prof. Ellis provides a useful overview of the approaches that have been taken to this kind of question, and an assessment of their pros and cons. Prof. Ellis then goes on to recommend a particular Index of Relative Disadvantage. While some additional conversations with experts may be required before the Province determines what best meets its long-term needs, assuming it accepts our proposal for a place-based approach, Prof. Ellis's work seems to us to be a good starting point.

Prof. Ellis's proposed Index of Relative Disadvantage uses area-specific data from the national census to assess the relative disadvantage of the people living in each area, considered as a group. As with the other approaches to this issue, it does not identify individuals, but rather places. It allows a comparison or ranking of all parts of the province using objective, universally available and highly reliable data.

Before we outline Prof. Ellis's approach in more detail, we should first indicate how we would see it being used to identify priority neighbourhoods. We would regard the rankings determined by the index as the basis to start a conversation with each affected municipality to determine areas requiring priority attention. We believe that the factors and approach used by Prof. Ellis will usefully identify areas for careful consideration, but that the Province must work with the affected municipalities to ensure that local, on-the-ground knowledge is taken into account to verify that the identified areas are indeed the most disadvantaged ones locally.

We note, for example, that Toronto has been able to develop a more comprehensive approach to identifying priority neighbourhoods, using more indicators and looking at the local availability of services. These and any similar initiatives elsewhere should be respected by the Province, and the lessons learned from them should also be included in conversations with other municipalities. In particular, every consideration should be given to adopting Toronto's approach of using a local mapping exercise to assess the practical availability of core public services in determining that an area warrants priority attention.

Similarly, municipalities should have the lead in determining the boundaries of any such areas. The units of analysis proposed by Prof. Ellis are small, which permits them to be either used individually or combined into approximations of actual neighbourhoods. For governance purposes, they will almost certainly have to be combined and included in a larger area to provide economies of scale and to support broader neighbourhood cohesion. Neighbourhoods "as lived," as opposed to "as mapped" do not follow the bright lines of census tracts or dissemination areas. There will often be issues of local geography or transportation or established patterns of social interaction, which better define the boundaries for these purposes.

It follows from what we have said that, in our view, the Province should respect determinations that have already been made about local areas of relative deprivation wherever those determinations have been made on factors relevant to the roots of violence involving youth. Neighbourhoods already selected on this basis, such as Toronto's 13 priority neighbourhoods, should be incorporated into the Province's strategy, in order to support the important work underway in them. This reflects the principle that the Province's interventions in communities should start by understanding and respecting what is already in place.

With those important conditions on its application, we see value in proceeding with Prof. Ellis's approach, following whatever brief consultations are required with experts to assess the need for refinements. That approach is to create an Index of Relative Disadvantage using readily available, highly reliable and inexpensive (about $20,000 for the entire province) census data. These data would be analyzed at a level known as a dissemination area. This is similar in size to the super-output areas very recently adopted in Britain. Each contains about 400-700 individuals. As appropriate, two or more dissemination areas can be grouped together to avoid the privacy issues that block the provision of statistics on very small areas, or to more closely approximate each local sense of neighbourhood.

As Prof. Ellis points out, there are several advantages to conducting the analysis at this level. The size of the dissemination areas or small groupings of them more closely approximates the sense of scale of a neighbourhood than does the traditionally used census tract (which is about 10-12 times bigger), particularly outside of Toronto and other large urban settings. Working at this level or, where appropriate, amalgamating two or more dissemination areas to approximate a neighbourhood, would address some of the concerns we have heard about stereotyping a relatively large area by creating the impression that all parts of it are deeply disadvantaged. And, even if amalgamated into larger areas and adjusted for the "as-lived" boundaries, having information by dissemination area allows a tight focus on the most disadvantaged areas within those larger constructs. This capacity for tighter targeting clearly allows the maximization of the efficiency of available resources.

With the dissemination area as the basic unit of analysis, the proposed Index of Relative Disadvantage is built on five domains of disadvantage. They are income, housing, education, family and employment. For each of these domains, Prof. Ellis has selected an indicator based on those used elsewhere and on the ready availability of highly reliable Statistics Canada data. The indicators are the percentage of residents with incomes below a defined poverty level, who live in homes they own, who did not graduate from high school, who are children in single-parent households, or who are males over 25 who are unemployed. A justification for each domain and indicator is found in his paper.

In Prof. Ellis's model, Statistics Canada data on each indicator would be analyzed and combined into an Index of Relative Disadvantage for each of the 19,177 dissemination areas in Ontario. The Index of Relative Disadvantage scores can then be used to rank all dissemination areas with respect to their relative levels of disadvantage, or to rank them according to the degree to which they fall above and below Ontario large urban, small urban and rural benchmarks.

Additionally, because the data Prof. Ellis proposes to use are available for all dissemination areas for 2001 and 2006, the approach allows an assessment of reductions or increases in disadvantage that may have occurred during that five-year period. Going forward, it will permit the use of that trend as a starting point for an analysis of whether investments in addressing the roots of violence involving youth are reaching the most disadvantaged areas in ways that make a difference. In effect, it not only permits targeting, but as well provides a built-in and inexpensive evaluation of that approach.

The immediate value, though, remains that the index will provide the Province and its municipal partners with an objective way to identify the areas of the province that should be considered as priority areas for a place-based approach.

A Note on Ontario's First Nations and our Review

The analysis in this chapter and the neighbourhood conditions described in Chapter 5 will be familiar to those who live and work in many First Nations communities. While there are wide variations among these communities, far too many are characterized by poverty, abuse, dysfunction and despair, and are isolated from the rest of the province by racism, as well as geography. As we have seen, these conditions create particularly fertile ground for the immediate risk factors for violence involving youth, including alienation, low self-esteem and a limited sense of hope or opportunity.

These conditions exist within some urban concentrations of Aboriginal people, but are most visible and often most extreme in reserve-based populations. Our review considered the former in some detail. Two of the eight communities in which we held Neighbourhood Insight Sessions have significant Aboriginal populations: Thunder Bay and Kingston-Galloway. And the urban Aboriginal youth consultation organized for us by the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres brought us the Aboriginal perspective from these and 11 other urban communities across the province. We have published a report on these important sessions in Volume 3 and have reflected what we learned from them throughout our report.

For several reasons, our review did not go on to attempt to deal with the particular circumstances of reserve-based First Nations. The first reason was a combination of the factors of time and jurisdiction. First Nations have their own constitutional status and generally have a relationship with the federal Crown, rather than the provincial government. Before a provincial review could conduct an examination of reserve conditions, complex negotiations with Aboriginal leadership and likely with individual reserves would be required. These would likely go beyond seeking agreement to have the review deal with reserves to also include issues of participation in the review itself and potentially in the framing of the terms of reference. As well, given the federal responsibility to deal with much of what a review would likely recommend, its role would also very likely have to be negotiated.

Given the circumstances, we did not feel that we could manage these negotiations in the time required, nor that we had the authority to negotiate with First Nations or the federal government about the mandate and composition the Premier set for our review.

The second reason was that we knew that by consulting urban Aboriginal youth throughout our work, we would learn a fair bit about on-reserve matters and how they affect the issue we are concerned about. There is significant fluidity between on- and off-reserve living, giving us confidence that consulting with urban Aboriginal youth would bring us some understanding of the Aboriginal context overall.

The third reason is that we believed that the place-based approach would, if it proved a viable way to address the roots issues in urban areas, also likely provide at least the starting point for a consideration of issues arising on reserves. Having now explored that approach, we believe that the concept of focusing on the areas of greatest disadvantage, working locally, building on strengths, focusing on outcomes rather than inputs, acting in partnership with and respecting local leadership, and coordinating the Province's own structures so that collaborative work in communities is not silo-blocked, all are highly relevant to an approach to the many roots that arise in First Nations communities.

Notwithstanding the primacy the Constitution gives to the federal government in this area, we strongly urge the Ontario government to open discussions with First Nations leadership about a focused exercise to assess the applicability to First Nations of what we propose for the rest of the province, having regard to their unique standing.

circumstances, strengths and needs. Federal participation in these talks should be sought, but its absence should not bar proceeding if the First Nations are willing to do so.

It may be as well that a new "roots" review focusing on reserves or groups of them is also needed, but we would leave that question to be determined following the talks that we propose.

In the meantime, there is one specific issue relating to Aboriginal youth that we believe should be actively pursued. When we were in Thunder Bay, we were told of the many hundreds of young Aboriginal teenagers who must move from remote northern communities to Thunder Bay for their high school education, as high school is not available where they live. We understand this situation exists elsewhere; our focus on Thunder Bay arises because of what we learned there and should not be seen as limiting our concerns to that city.

We were told that these youth are expected to find boarding places in Thunder Bay and to live without parental supervision for the duration of their school year. The only exception involves the students who attend an Aboriginal high school, which serves only a limited number of the remote reserves. We were advised by the principal of that school that the federal government provides funding to permit the school to stay open until 10 p.m., that the students' living places are inspected and that those students have access to a variety of supports when they are not in school.

But the majority of the students from these remote communities are left on their own, subject to only whatever guidance they are offered by their landlords. This is an obvious recipe for reducing the chances of positive engagements outside of school and increasing the odds of negative ones. To us, it simply makes no sense to take young children from remote communities, drop them into an unfamiliar urban setting and leave them unsupervised for the vast majority of their time, living as boarders in the houses of strangers.

We were also told that some Aboriginal families are so concerned by this situation that they move off the reserve and into Thunder Bay to look after their children. We were told that when they do so, they may lose their benefits from their First Nation. They are then forced to either subsist on welfare or find whatever employment is available. In either event, the disruption to the life of the family and their normal social networks is enormous.

No doubt there are interesting issues of federal-provincial jurisdiction that could be pursued for years and years while this deplorable situation continues. We think the answer is obvious. These children are Ontario residents. They are living in Ontario cities and going to Ontario schools. They are being subjected in Ontario to conditions that seriously erode the potential for that education to be effective and that, at the same time, easily lead to the immediate risk factors for violence involving youth.

In these circumstances, we believe that the Province must intervene to ensure that positive, engaging and culturally relevant activities are available to these youth after school and on weekends. The Province should ensure that the places they live are suitable and that they have safe and welcoming places to gather, play, do homework and engage in the arts. They should have mentors, and youth and other workers should be available to provide outreach to, and structure, coordination and support for them.

As well, when families move to town to look after their children, we think that the Province should provide settlement services to the whole family. As we discuss later in our report, programs and services for one family member can quickly founder if other family members are not receiving services they need. And, as we also describe, services will be far more effective if they are situated in the context of a family. In this, the Province needs to reflect the kinds of services provided to immigrants, as the cultural and other divides faced by some Aboriginal people when they leave remote communities can be as great as or greater than those faced by immigrants from distant lands.

Chapter 8:

Highlights of Existing Approaches to Address the Roots of Violence Involving Youth

Introduction

In Chapter 3, we discussed many of the conditions that can give rise to the immediate risk factors for violence involving youth — its roots — and in Chapter 5 we described the very troubling trends that we found in both the nature and consequences of that violence. Before going on in Chapter 9 to provide our advice on how best to address the roots, we discuss in this chapter a number of relevant programs that have been put in place in Ontario and elsewhere, and standards for evaluating them. We provide examples of crime prevention programs that have been found to be either proven or promising according to those evaluations, and we review the kinds of investments Ontario is now making to prevent crime and sometimes to address its roots. We then provide some examples of current programs being offered in Ontario communities.

In discussing these programs, we note that most of the academic literature considered by our lead researcher, Prof. Scot Wortley, and drawn on for this chapter, focuses on crime prevention. This means the evaluations assessed programs to determine whether their participants are less likely to engage in crime than those who do not participate. These assessments are very valuable for determining the kinds of interventions to make once a youth has been entangled in the kinds of roots we have identified — poverty, racism, economic disadvantage, and so on — and we commend them to the government for that purpose. However, as our report demonstrates, we as a society must address the roots themselves if we are to end the recurring cycle of violence and the need for such interventions.

In this chapter, we will look at programs and the evidence that supports them from four different perspectives.

- **Section 1** reviews how programs and their outcomes are evaluated and provides some examples of approaches and programs that are judged in the academic literature to be either "proven" or "promising."
- **Section 2** takes a look at other jurisdictions, especially the United Kingdom, to see if programs elsewhere can inform our work in Ontario.
- **Section 3** reports on an inventory of Ontario programs that we conducted, providing a snapshot of how the Ontario government invests in programs designed to reduce violence involving youth. In this section, we also point out some things we think Ontario is doing properly and some areas where we believe gaps exist.
- **Section 4** contains an overview of programs now operating in Ontario, including those funded by the Ontario government. We are not necessarily endorsing these programs or saying that they represent best practices; instead, we are providing some appreciation of the breadth and depth of programming and spending that exists in the province already. It is indeed a foundation on which the government can, and must, build.

At the end of Section 4, we offer our conclusions about the strengths and gaps in Ontario's approaches and in Chapter 9, we set out a community-based strategy to make more effective the kinds of interventions discussed in this chapter.

Section 1: Evaluating Programs and Their Outcomes

Complying with the mandate contained in our terms of reference requires us to be rigorous in our selection of tested approaches in both Ontario and other jurisdictions. In this section, we will review evaluation criteria and describe some approaches and programs that have been evaluated as successful or promising.

We must note that while there is an extensive literature evaluating crime prevention programs that are intended to help reduce youth violence, the literature documenting other approaches that may be designed to achieve different outcomes, such as reducing youth violence by addressing alienation or promoting social inclusion, is more limited. For this reason, our listings of programs and approaches have focused primarily on those with crime prevention objectives.

Evaluation Criteria

Given the number of programs claiming to reduce violence involving youth, it is very difficult, on the surface, to distinguish among those programs that are effective, those that are promising, and those that have no effect or may actually do harm. The only practical way to sort them out is through proper evaluation, and fortunately there is a growing body of international literature that points to effective crime prevention techniques.

To make use of this knowledge, we commissioned a literature review to highlight programs that have undergone high-quality evaluations. We focused these reviews on programs that address the roots of crime and violence through prevention, rather than police crime suppression programs. The literature reviews are provided elsewhere, but the following points are important to our general discussion.

First, what do we mean by a "high-quality evaluation"?

To meet this standard, an evaluation must meet most or all of the following criteria:

- The program evaluation is conducted by objective, external researchers with proper research training.
- Program objectives and goals are clear, and outcome measures are properly designed to reflect these objectives and goals.

- The program evaluation measures outcomes and behaviours before and after program implementation, to determine if the program had any effect over time.
- The program evaluation also employs a control group that does not receive the program or treatment, to ensure that observed changes are the result of the program and not some other outside influence.
- Participants in the program are assigned randomly to the program or the control group, so as to avoid choosing subjects based on their potential to succeed.
- The evaluation study measures both short- and long-term effects.

Using evaluation studies that meet most or all of these criteria, it is possible to sort programs into two categories:

Proven (Model) Programs: Numerous high-quality, published evaluations in different communities or settings demonstrate that these programs have directly or indirectly reduced violent or aggressive behaviour in youth.

Promising Programs: Limited evaluations have yielded some positive results, but the rigour, scope or results of the evaluations falls short of the proven criteria.

Based on these criteria and categories, our lead researcher, Prof. Scot Wortley, conducted a review of international academic literature and selected the following examples of approaches and programs that have been evaluated as proven or promising. The classifications follow systems used by many respected academic institutions. The program descriptions and evaluation results, also provided to us by Prof. Wortley, are based on the literature review and material available from various websites. Where we have been able to identify specific websites for programs, we have included them in the text; otherwise, those seeking further details may find they are available at websites such as those of the Promising Practices Network on Children, Families and Communities (www.promisingpractices.net), the Coalition for Evidence-Based Policy (www.evidencebasedprograms.org) and the Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence (www.colorado.edu/cspv/blueprints).

Later in this chapter, we will discuss the Ontario experience.

Proven (Model) Programs

Home Visitations

The research literature has identified the first two to four years of life as crucial to childhood development. Infants and young children who do not receive proper parenting or care during this period are at much higher risk of developing various health and behavioural problems, including aggression and criminality.

A large number of home visitation programs have been developed to provide "at-risk" mothers (usually defined as young, single and poor) with intensive, in-home training about prenatal health, infant nutrition and parenting skills. Many of these programs also provide young mothers with temporary childcare and counselling concerning future pregnancies, child care and employment opportunities. Evaluations suggest that intensive, highly structured nurse visitation programs are the most effective type of program in this category. However, less intense programs, often involving social workers or other health care professionals, have also shown considerable success.

Examples of "proven" nurse visitation programs include the Nurse-Family Partnership program (www.nursefamilypartnership.org), with sites in more than 20 U.S. states, and its predecessor, the David Olds Nurse Visitation Project. Both these programs, developed by David Olds, a professor of pediatrics, psychiatry and preventative medicine at the University of Colorado at Denver, involve monthly home visits by nurses from pregnancy through the first two years of a child's life. Longitudinal studies have demonstrated that, compared to control group subjects, children whose mothers participate in home visitation programs are less likely to engage in serious violence and criminality in adolescence.

Preschool Intellectual Enrichment

Many studies have demonstrated that preschool intellectual development programs can significantly reduce anti-social behaviour, adolescent delinquency and adult criminality. Such programs — often delivered in a daycare setting — are designed to improve school readiness, thinking and social skills, self-control and emotional development for economically disadvantaged children. Such programs focus on providing stimulating and enriching experiences that are not likely to be provided in the home environment through developmentally appropriate learning curricula, a wide array of cognitive-based activities and training opportunities for parents so that they can better support school activities at home.

One of the most well-known programs in this category is the Perry Preschool Project, which was developed in Ypsilanti, Mich., in the 1960s. This program targets economically disadvantaged families with children three to four years of age. The project involves an intensive two-year intervention that operates two to three hours per day, five days a week. As well as a classroom component, the program also involves home visitations by highly trained teachers.

Evaluations of the program have demonstrated that, compared with control group subjects, Perry Preschool participants have much lower levels of adolescent delinquency, less contact with youth justice officials, fewer arrests at 19 years of age, less involvement in serious fights, less involvement in youth gangs and less contact with the police. Long-term results indicate that, by 40 years of age, Perry Preschool participants have fewer arrests for both violent and property crimes, higher levels of academic achievement, higher rates of employment, higher mean incomes, greater economic independence and less reliance on public assistance.

Early Intervention Strategies

Criminological research indicates that long-term, chronic offenders are often aggressive and anti-social in early childhood, but that early intervention strategies may help families identify and respond to children who display such behaviours. Parent Management Training programs, such as those developed by Dr. Gerald Patterson at the Oregon Social Learning Center and by Dr. Alan Kazdin at Yale University, also form the basis for two other programs, the Preventative Treatment Program and the Incredible Years Series. The former was developed in Montreal by Prof. Richard Tremblay at the University of Montreal, and the latter by Dr. Carolyn Webster-Stratton, Professor and Director of the Parenting Clinic at the University of Washington.

Parent training is a major component of all three programs. Parent Management Training programs are generally delivered through groups, while the Preventative Treatment Program uses individualized training in the home. The Incredible Years Series provides manuals that may be used by parents individually or in clinical/school settings.

The programs have similar goals for parent training, including techniques for monitoring a child's behaviour, enforcing rules promptly and consistently, using rewards and punishments effectively and managing family conflicts.

In addition to parent training, the Preventative Treatment Programs (designed to intervene with youth from ages seven to nine) and Incredible Years Series (from ages two to 10) have training components that engage the youth themselves and their teachers.

All three have undergone high-quality evaluations through which they have demonstrated their effectiveness. For example:

- Parent Management Training can significantly reduce adolescent delinquency and anti-social behaviour.
- As much as three years after boys receive Preventative Treatment Programs, they are significantly less likely to show a range of violent or anti-social behaviours.
- The Incredible Years Series not only reduces childhood aggression and reduces conduct problems at home and school, but also improves children's problem-solving, anger-management and social skills.

Functional Family Therapy

Functional Family Therapy (www.fftinc.com) is an intervention program based in Seattle, Wash., that targets youth ages 11-18, at risk of or already demonstrating signs of delinquency, violence, substance abuse, conduct disorder, defiant disorder or disruptive behaviour disorder. The program typically requires between eight and 26 sessions of direct service time for referred youth and their families. The number of sessions required largely depends on the severity of the individual case. Service delivery is flexible and depends on individual needs. Services are generally delivered by a two-person team and can include specially trained teachers, social workers, counsellors, mental health professionals and probation officers. Clients can receive services within the home as well as in clinics, schools, youth correctional facilities, community centres or at the time of re-entry from institutional placement.

Functional Family Therapy attempts to enhance protective factors and reduce exposure to risk, while also preventing early treatment termination. There are five basic steps:

1. Engagement: designed to prevent youth and their families from dropping out of treatment early
2. Motivation: designed to change maladaptive emotional reactions and beliefs and increase alliance, trust, hope and lasting change
3. Assessment: designed to clarify individual, family and outside relationships and how they contribute to problematic behaviours

4. Behaviour change: provides training in communication skills, parenting skills, problem-solving, anger-management and conflict resolution

5. Generalization: develops case management strategies based on family functional needs, community-based environmental constraints and the available resources provided by program therapists.

High-quality randomized trials of Functional Family Therapy have demonstrated that these programs are effective in reducing youth delinquency and violence; drug use; conduct disorder; oppositional defiant disorder and disruptive behaviour disorder. Furthermore, compared to control group subjects, participants are less likely to require more restrictive social services (i.e., youth custody, group homes, foster care, etc.) and are significantly less likely to become involved in the adult criminal justice system.

Bullying Prevention

Research suggests there is a positive correlation between bullying, a form of interpersonal violence that can damage both victims and offenders, and more serious violence in later adolescence and early adulthood. Therefore, reducing bullying may prevent the onset of more serious forms of violent behaviour.

Many anti-bullying programs have been developed, but one stands out as a "proven" strategy: The Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (www.clemson.edu/olweus), a multi-component, universal, school-based program intended to address bullying behaviour by restructuring the school environment to eliminate the opportunities and rewards that exist for bullying. The program targets students in elementary, middle and junior high schools and should be implemented for at least one year. Every student within the school participates.

This bullying prevention program has three main components:

1. School-wide: a confidential student questionnaire to assess the extent and nature of bullying within a particular school; a student-teacher conference to discuss bullying and plan interventions; development of specific school rules against bullying; formation of a Bullying Prevention Coordinating Committee; increased student supervision at the times and locations where bullying is most likely to take place.

2. Class-level: classroom meetings about bullying and peer relations; class rules established and enforced; teacher meetings with parents and students.

3. Individual-level: interventions specifically for individual perpetrators and victims, which often involve discussions between students, parents, teachers and counsellors.

Large evaluations have found this program reduces bullying and bullying victimization by 30 to 70 per cent. It also reduces vandalism, alcohol use, fighting and theft. Additionally, it has caused significant improvements in classroom order and more positive attitudes towards school work.

For information about an Ontario anti-bullying program, Roots of Empathy, see page 203 later in this chapter.

Multi-systemic Therapy

Multi-systemic Therapy (www.mstservices.com) is an intensive family- and community-based treatment program developed at the Medical University of South Carolina and now offered through an independent but university-affiliated and licensed organization. The therapy addresses the multiple causes of serious violent and anti-social behaviour among youth. It targets chronic, violent and/or delinquent youth and their families and focuses on young people who are already involved in the justice system and who either have been or are at risk of being incarcerated.

Its objectives are to:

1. Improve parental discipline practices

2. Decrease association with delinquent peers

3. Increase association with non-delinquent peers

4. Improve academic performance

5. Develop a network of support for youth that includes both immediate and extended family, neighbours, teachers, fellow students and friends.

This program provides intensive therapy in the family's home or wherever the members are most comfortable. The initial sessions identify individual and family problems that require attention, while subsequent sessions provide treatment for these problems. Focusing on factors in the individual's family and social network that may contribute to violent or criminal behaviour, Multi-systemic Therapy works to eliminate risk factors including a lack of adult mentors, low verbal communication skills, poor academic performance, dropping out of school, association with deviant peers, inadequate social skills, poor anger-management abilities and low community support. Treatment usually requires 60-80 hours over a period of four months. However, the treatment period is often adjusted to meet the needs of individual families, with more serious cases requiring longer periods of treatment.

Evaluations indicate that, compared with control group subjects, participants have 25-75-per-cent reductions in long-term arrest rates, 47-64 per cent fewer out-of-home placements, less violent offending and victimization, improved family functioning, better school performance and decreased mental health problems.

Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care

Youth within the child welfare system are particularly vulnerable to negative life outcomes including poor educational attainment, under-employment, homelessness, poor mental health, criminality and violence. Multidimensional Treatment Foster Care (www.mtfc.com), based on studies conducted in the 1960s and '70s at the Oregon Social Learning Center, has been developed to deal with adolescents within the child welfare system who have histories of chronic or serious criminality and are at high risk of incarceration. It is designed to:

1. Create opportunities and supports for participants to enhance their community living experience
2. Decrease future delinquency and lower recidivism rates for young offenders
3. Provide foster parents, biological parents, relatives, teachers and friends with the skills and resources they require to help young offenders assimilate back into the wider community.

The program provides an alternative for a youth who might otherwise be sent to a group home or youth correctional facility. Instead, each is placed, typically for six to nine months, with a foster family that has been trained to implement a structured, individualized program for youth with a history of chronic delinquency. The foster family will have learned how to establish and enforce rules within the home environment and how to monitor peer relationships. A heavy emphasis is placed on teaching social skills and providing opportunities for social activities. Periodic visits to the youth's biological or adoptive family are also arranged, during which the family has a chance to implement the youth's individualized treatment program on a trial basis. Foster families must attend weekly support meetings that focus on individual treatment programs for youth participants.

The second part of the program is focused on training biological or adoptive parents to ensure that when a youth returns home, he or she will continue to receive the treatments that started in foster care. Biological or adoptive families must attend weekly therapy and treatment sessions during which parents learn effective methods for supervising, disciplining and rewarding youth.

Long-term evaluations repeatedly demonstrate that youth who participate in the program have significantly fewer arrests and spend 60 per cent fewer days in youth correctional facilities than control group subjects. After 24 months, participants were significantly less likely to run away from foster homes and were less likely to have used hard drugs. They also had better school attendance records and better academic performance than control group subjects.

Life Skills Training

Life Skills Training, based in White Plains, N.Y., is a school intervention program that provides prevention-related information regarding drug use and criminality, the promotion of anti-drug norms, the development of drug refusal skills and the development of self-management abilities to students in grades 6–8. Teachers or trained health professionals implement this three-year intervention strategy in the classroom.

The program involves 15 classroom sessions in year one, 10 sessions in year two and five sessions in year three. The program consists of three major components:

1. General self-management skills: Teaches students to examine their self-image, gain insight about their own talents and limitations, set goals for the future, track personal progress, confront personal challenges and react to problem situations

2. Social skills: Teaches students to overcome shyness, gain communication skills, develop assertiveness, learn anger-management techniques and realize that aggression is not the only strategy for dealing with problem situations

3. Information and skills specifically related to drug use: Teaches students about common misconceptions concerning drugs and alcohol; students also learn and practise various techniques that can help them resist social pressures to use drugs.

Large-scale randomized trials have over the past 25 years consistently demonstrated that, compared with control group subjects, participants have lower rates of tobacco, alcohol and illicit drug use and significantly lower levels of delinquency and violent behaviour. Positive results are sustained at one year, three years and six years following program participation. Finally, although originally developed as a program for middle-grade Caucasian children, the program has also been demonstrated among inner-city, economically disadvantaged ethnic populations.

Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies

Promoting Alternative THinking Strategies — PATHS — is a school-based program that teaches students emotional literacy, self-control, verbal communication skills, empathy, problem-solving, impulse control, self-awareness, social competence, positive peer relations and inter-personal problem-solving skills. Intended for delivery in a classroom setting, it works best when initiated at the beginning of elementary school (Grade 1) and continued through Grade 5. The curriculum is taught three times per week for a 20-30-minute period. Although primarily focused on school and classroom settings, information and activities are often included for parents.

High-quality evaluations have established that, compared with control group subjects, PATHS participants demonstrate improved self-control, increased ability to tolerate frustration, improved thinking and planning skills, the effective use of conflict resolution strategies, decreased school conduct problems and lower levels of violence and aggression. The program has been proven effective in a number of different settings and with children from different social class and ethnic backgrounds.

Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy Within Correctional Settings

Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy (www.nacbt.org) is a correctional treatment approach that can be used on its own or as part of a broader rehabilitation framework. Using exercises and instruction techniques such as role-playing, reinforcement and modelling, Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy seeks to alter dysfunctional thinking patterns, including a focus on dominance in interpersonal relationships, feelings of entitlement, self-justification, displacement of blame and unrealistic expectations about the consequences of anti-social behaviour. In doing so, it focuses on one of the most robust correlates of crime — anti-social attitudes.

Correctional staff can be trained to conduct this program in a relatively short period of time. Qualified staff helps youth transform negative thoughts into positive ones, and the emphasis on the connection between thoughts and behaviours helps change behaviour.

Correctional programs that have included Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy have fared well during evaluation research. Indeed, meta-analyses indicate reductions in youth offending that are 10–33 per cent greater than control group samples.

Promising Programs

Adult Mentoring

When properly delivered, mentoring can provide youth with positive role models, adult supervision, emotional support and educational assistance. Mentors can also negate the impact of deviant peers.

Some mentoring programs have been shown to reduce youth violence and delinquency, while others have proven to be ineffective. Research suggests that mentoring programs are most likely to be effective when they:

1. Properly screen mentors for empathy, professionalism and commitment
2. Properly train mentors
3. Properly match mentors with youth participants
4. Target fatherless youth from economically disadvantaged communities
5. Involve a high level of weekly interaction (several hours per week at a minimum)
6. Provide long-term relationships (at least two years commitment on the part of the mentor)

7. Provide ongoing supervision, training and support for mentors
8. Are combined with other programs in the community (cognitive skills, sports and recreation, etc.)
9. Ensure that a relationship develops between the mentor and the parent(s) as well as between the mentor and the youth.

Mentoring programs are less effective when they lack structure or clearly stated objectives, when mentors are not properly trained or supported or when they involve only short-term relationships; some studies suggest that short-term mentorship can actually reduce feelings of self-worth and enhance feelings of abandonment. There is also considerable evidence to suggest that youth with serious behavioural or mental health problems may not benefit from mentorship.

The Center for the Study and Prevention of Violence at the University of Colorado has identified Big Brothers/Big Sisters (in Canada, information is available at www.bbbsc.ca) as a model mentoring program. The organization usually targets youth between the ages of six and 18 who come from single-parent families. Volunteer mentors who regularly interact with youth in one-on-one relationships provide service delivery. Big Brothers/Big Sisters distinguishes itself from other mentoring programs by establishing rigorous published standards and required procedures. A case manager screens all volunteers, makes and supervises matches and closes matches when eligibility requirements are no longer met or either party wants to terminate the relationship.

High-quality evaluation studies have found that this approach is effective at achieving several major program objectives. For example, compared to a control group, participants are less likely to use alcohol and illicit drugs, are less likely to engage in violence (including fights), have higher levels of academic achievement, have better attitudes towards school, are more optimistic about their career prospects and have higher-quality relationships with both parents and peers.

Employment Programs

The relationship between employment and youth crime is not a simple one.

An extensive review of the evaluative research pertaining to youth employment and crime (Bushway and Reuter, 2002) separated youth employment programs into three broad categories: (1) Summer work placement programs and subsidized employment; (2)

Short-term training (approximately six months) followed by job placement; and (3) Long-term programs with extensive training and education, a residential component and job placement. The research results suggest that long-term, intensive youth employment programs are most likely to be effective.

One youth employment program that has been supported by the evaluation literature (for example, Bushway and Reuter, 2002, cited in Wortley et al., Volume 5) is Job Corps, and it has been deemed the only large-scale employment program for youth that has produced sustained, significant earnings gains for disadvantaged youths (Burghardt et al., 2001, cited in Wortley et al, Volume 5). Founded in 1964, Job Corps is the largest, longest running, most expensive and most extensively evaluated job-training program in the United States. Each year, it serves over 60,000 participants between the ages of 16 and 24, at a cost of $16,500 per participant. The program is aimed at disadvantaged youths (including high school dropouts, ethnic/racial minorities and those with prior criminal histories).

Job Corps services are delivered in four stages: 1) community outreach, recruitment and admissions; 2) Career Preparation Period; 3) Career Development Period and 4) Career Transition Period.

A distinctive characteristic of Job Corps is its residential component, designed to provide a highly structured environment that supports training. While it is not mandatory that participants live at the Job Corps centres, approximately 88 per cent take advantage of this opportunity. There is no time limit to the program; the average length of participation is about eight months.

The U.S. Department of Labor sponsored a high-quality evaluation of the Job Corps program based on 11,313 youth drawn from all eligible applicants between late 1994 and 1995. It showed, among other outcomes, that participation in Job Corps significantly reduced the likelihood of arrest and conviction, and of involvement in violent behaviour.

The success of Job Corps may be attributed to the uniform and proper implementation across sites of an intensive program model that is both individualized and self-paced. It is also suggested that the program was successful because participation rates were high and the structured environment allowed for the many barriers that participants faced to be addressed. Despite the high costs associated with the program, Job Corps was found to be a cost-effective strategy for reducing youth crime. Indeed, economists at Mathematica Policy Research recently concluded that Job Corps returns $2 in tax revenues for every dollar invested in the program.

Sports Programs

Many people believe that young people who are actively engaged in sports will be less likely to become involved in illegal behaviour. Therefore, sports programs have long been seen as strategies to reduce youth delinquency and enhance positive youth development.

Although evaluation research has produced mixed results, we believe sports programs can have a positive effect, if not on crime prevention directly, then certainly on other factors that can contribute to youth violence — factors such as enhancing self-esteem, learning the value of teamwork and developing greater self-discipline. However, as with mentoring and youth employment strategies, special attention needs to be paid to how sports and recreation programs are delivered.

According to the research, sports programs are most likely to reduce youth crime and violence when:

1. The sporting activity is part of a program that is inclusive of all youth and run with the specific goal of reducing youth violence.
2. Competition and aggression are de-emphasized in favour of skill acquisition and social interaction.
3. The sports program opens up other opportunities for youth such as volunteering and future employment.
4. The coaching staff is trained in conflict resolution and dealing sensitively with youth, as well as how to manage sporting goals.
5. The program has adequate funding to be in operation for an extended period of time.
6. Local leaders and members of communities are consulted and included in sport schemes.
7. Parents and teachers are included in the program and connections are made from the program to school and home life.
8. The program gives viable opportunities for females to participate and learn in a gender-safe environment where equality is taught and respected.

Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada (www.bgccan.com) provides one example of sports and recreation programming that appears promising in reducing youth crime and delinquency. Run out of local facilities, including schools, religious institutions or community centres, programs typically target at-risk youth ages five to 18. Programs usually operate between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m., the after-school hours in which under-supervised children are the most vulnerable.

Other key elements of Boys and Girls Clubs programs are:

- Each club develops its programs in response to specific community needs.
- Programs are provided by qualified staff members that take a child-focused approach to skill development, self-esteem enhancement and character building.
- Sports and recreational activities are provided in conjunction with other programs that can help develop youth and support families.

More than 20 quality evaluations of Boys and Girls Clubs have been conducted. Results suggest that participation in Boys and Girls Clubs improves school performance, improves family life, reduces violent behaviour and substance abuse and helps youth avoid conflicts with the law.

Family Violence Prevention Programs

Research suggests that, every year, many Canadian children are exposed to domestic violence. For example, using data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth, it was estimated that one in five Canadian children ages 6-11 has witnessed domestic violence during the past 12 months (Hotton, 2003, cited in Wortley et al., Volume 5). Research has also consistently demonstrated a strong correlation between childhood exposure to domestic violence and negative life outcomes, including poor academic performance, higher levels of anxiety and depression, higher levels of aggression and violent behaviour, and higher rates of adult criminality. With these findings in mind, programs designed to assist children and families involved with domestic violence must be seen as highly significant.

Evaluation research suggests that promising intervention and prevention programs for domestic violence are characterized by:

- A focus on sustaining healthy families
- The involvement of communities
- The provision of professional counselling
- The flexible delivery of treatment services.

Furthermore, programs that approach prevention from multiple perspectives (individual, family, community, etc.) appear to be the most effective at helping children deal with the trauma of family violence (Leschied, 2007, cited in Wortley et al., Volume 5). Additional research suggests that adapting family violence programs to fit diverse cultural settings is also important.

Specific domestic violence programs that have been identified as promising include the Learning Club, a 16-week counselling and mentoring program for abused women and their children; Project SUPPORT, which targets children ages 4-9 who have been exposed to inter-parental violence and are manifesting aggressive behaviour; and Kids Club, a 10-week program designed for children ages 5-13 that focuses on child resiliency and trauma recovery (Graham-Bermann and Hughes, 2003).

School-Based Programs

Young people with a weak attachment to school and poor academic performance are more likely to indulge in serious delinquency and violent behaviour. In response, school-based initiatives have been developed to prevent youth violence, and some of these programs were discussed above in the "Proven" programs section. Other promising school-based strategies include:

1. Programs that clarify and effectively communicate norms of behaviour through school rules, consistently enforce those rules and consistently provide positive reinforcement for pro-social behaviour
2. Programs that provide teachers with effective class management skills
3. Programs that provide cognitively based social competence curricula

4. Programs that deliver cognitively based conflict resolution and violence prevention curricula
5. Programs that deliver highly structured after-school activities
6. Programs that promote a school environment in which students feel emotionally as well as educationally supported.

The evaluation literature reveals that programs that forge a strong relationship among schools, children and parents may be particularly promising. Specific family-school partnership programs that have demonstrated positive results include:

Linking the Interests of Families and Teachers — LIFT — is a 10-week intervention program focused on preventing aggression and other conduct problems. Another program administered by the Oregon Social Learning Center, LIFT is intended to be delivered to the entire population of first and fifth grade students. However, it is especially designed for children living in economically disadvantaged, high-risk communities.

LIFT is organized around three main elements:

- A classroom component of 20 one-hour sessions comprising lectures and role-playing, structured group skills practice, skills review and daily rewards
- A modification of the Good Behaviour Game (GBG), in which each class is divided into small groups for playground activities, and children can earn rewards by avoiding negative behaviours and exhibiting positive problem-solving skills
- A parental training module, during which parents are taught to create a positive home environment that promotes proper supervision and disciplinary practices that reinforce the school-based curriculum.

A high-quality evaluation of LIFT indicates that, compared to a control group, LIFT participants demonstrate significant decreases in physical aggression on the playground. Interestingly, these reductions were most pronounced for children who had rated as the most aggressive during the pre-test period. Also, when compared to a control group, teacher rating data indicate that LIFT participants had a significant increase in positive social skills and classroom behaviour.

The Seattle Social Development Project (http://depts.washington.edu/ssdp) is a multi-year, school-based program that targets elementary school and middle-school children residing in economically deprived neighbourhoods. It provides both teacher and parent training and is designed to minimize classroom disruptions by establishing clear rules and rewards for compliance.

Evaluations indicate that this program can improve school performance, improve the quality of family relationships and reduce childhood aggression. Furthermore, by Grade 11, participants, compared to control group students, showed reduced involvement in violent delinquency and sexual activity and lower levels of both drug and alcohol consumption.

FAST Track is another comprehensive, long-term prevention program that aims to prevent chronic behavioural problems among youth from disadvantaged communities. Based on the view that anti-social and violent behaviour stems from multiple influences, the program includes the school, the family and the individual in the intervention strategy. The program spans Grades 1-6.

FAST Track has five major components: parent training, home visitations, social skills training for students, academic tutoring and classroom intervention using the PATHS curriculum discussed above.

Early evaluations of FAST Track indicate that, compared to a control group, participants scored significantly higher on parental and teacher ratings of behaviour and displayed significantly less aggressive, disruptive and oppositional behaviour in the classroom. Children in FAST Track classrooms also nominated fewer peers as being aggressive. The parents of FAST Track students were also less likely to endorse the physical punishment of their children and subsequently demonstrate more appropriate disciplinary techniques. Overall, the relationships between FAST Track students and their parents seem to be emotionally warmer and more supportive than control group samples.

The **Behavioral Monitoring and Reinforcement Program** is another school-based intervention that has shown positive results among juvenile populations. It targets students in the seventh and eighth grades from low-income, urban, racially mixed neighbourhoods and is designed to challenge youth cynicism about the outside world and related feelings of hopelessness and alienation.

Teachers and program staff monitor student behaviour, and students are rewarded for appropriate behaviour. Better communication among students, teachers and parents is emphasized, and staff contact parents regularly to inform them of their children's progress. In weekly sessions, students discuss their behaviour and learn about alternatives to behaviour considered inappropriate.

Evaluations have demonstrated both short- and long-term positive outcomes. Program participants, for example, have consistently demonstrated higher grades and better attendance than control group students. Results from one-year followup studies show that BMRP students, compared with control students, have significantly lower levels of delinquency, drug abuse and school-related problems (suspensions, expulsions, absenteeism, academic failure, etc.). A five-year followup study found that, compared with control group subjects, BMRP participants were much less likely to have been arrested or convicted of a crime.

Crime Prevention Through Community Development

Crime prevention through community development is a crime prevention philosophy or orientation rather than a program. It maintains addressing crime and promoting social justice requires addressing the root causes of crime. Community development, it argues, can do this by changing negative influences within the social, economic, educational and environmental domains (Bursik and Grasmick, 1993, cited in Wortley et al., Volume 5).

According to recent research (Acosta and Chavis, 2007, cited in Wortleyet al., Volume 5):

> Community development occurs when community residents establish their own organizations to support long-term community problem-solving, with the goals of improving the quality of life for all residents, reducing social inequalities such as poverty and racism, upholding democratic values, encouraging residents to reach their potential, and creating a sense of community in which people work together to accomplish goals.

Compared to individual programs, the community development philosophy provides a much more comprehensive and sustainable model for crime prevention. One comprehensive community development model is known as the "Weed and Seed" strategy, typically accomplished through four interconnected strategies:

1. Law enforcement "weeds out" violent offenders by coordinating and integrating efforts in high-crime neighbourhoods. Special anti-violence units or guns and gangs task forces may be used.

2. Community policing is used to repair the damage done by aggressive policing tactics. Community policing efforts are also used to increase community involvement in crime prevention and increase community confidence in the criminal justice system.

3. Prevention, intervention and rehabilitation strategies are developed and implemented to address the risk and protective factors associated with neighbourhood crime and violence.

4. Neighbourhood revitalization and restoration efforts are fully supported and implemented. Economic development initiatives are used to strengthen community institutions and revitalize physical, educational, economic, social and recreational conditions within specific communities (Acosta and Chavis 2007, cited in Wortley et al., Volume 5).

However, according to the evaluation literature, Weed and Seed initiatives have been only somewhat successful, often because governments heavily fund "weeding" without adequately funding "seeding." For example, a recent analysis revealed that over two-thirds of the financial resources extended for gang reduction in Los Angeles were allocated to police suppression efforts. Less than a third was allocated to community crime prevention or community development (Justice Policy Institute, 2007, cited in Wortley et al., Volume 5). Under such circumstances, individual criminals and gang members are arrested and convicted, only to be replaced by the next generation of offenders who have experienced the same levels of economic and social marginalization as their predecessors.

Furthermore, research indicates that unless they are accompanied by strong community policing and community development initiatives, overly aggressive policing tactics can have a negative impact on community conditions, contribute to the alienation and frustration of minority youth, and ultimately contribute to violent crime. One study, for example, found that heavy-handed suppression efforts could increase gang cohesion and aggravate police-community tensions (Justice Policy Institute 2007; Decker 2007; Skogan 2006; Klein and Maxson 2006, all cited in Wortley et al., Volume 5).

Conclusion

The discussion above has highlighted the characteristics of proven and promising programs. Looking at the broad spectrum of programs that seem to help reduce youth violence through crime prevention, it's clear there is no single, perfect program that will prevent violence and criminality for all youth. Rather, an individualized case management strategy may be the most promising way of dealing with individuals, and many youth may require more than one type of program to avoid violence and other negative life outcomes. We do believe, however, that it is possible to describe general principles that should be considered when developing crime prevention and violence reduction strategies. These include:

- Programs that address multiple risk factors are more effective than those that address only one.

- Programs that operate across social settings — including the family, schools, peer groups and the wider community — are more effective than programs that are isolated within one area of a young person's life.

- Programs containing skill-based components that increase educational attainment and improve employment prospects are particularly effective.

- Violent offending is linked to deficiencies in thought processes and poor problem-solving skills. Programs that build social competence skills are thus beneficial.

- School-based programs focusing on the way classes are run and emphasizing behavioural skills are effective.

- Programs that are culturally specific are effective.

- Programs with clearly stated aims and objectives, well trained and committed staff and strict regulations that support program integrity are effective.

- Programs that are of sufficient length and intensity are effective; short-term, poorly funded programs are often ineffective.

- Programs that target young children are somewhat more effective than programs that target adolescents who have already demonstrated delinquent or violent behaviour.

- Programs need to be extensively monitored and evaluated to establish effectiveness. High-quality evaluation is needed to identify ineffective practices and improve upon interventions that demonstrate promise.

Section 2: Programs From Other Jurisdictions

We turn now to activities in other jurisdictions both to provide a context for Ontario's activities and to glean lessons from their experience. In particular, we will look at the provinces of Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador, and the United Kingdom, which we visited in the spring of 2008.

Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador

We have identified poverty as an underlying root of the immediate risk factors of violence involving youth. Two provinces, Quebec and Newfoundland and Labrador, have in recent years implemented comprehensive anti-poverty strategies. Each strategy shares certain key elements, including a broad focus on both the social and economic context of poverty, multi-year action plans, and a clear framework for administering programs and evaluating progress. Some of these are also important to the United Kingdom's approach to poverty and racism, which we will discuss in the following section.

Quebec

In 2002, Quebec's National Assembly adopted Bill 112, *An Act to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion*. A report prepared for the Parliamentary Information and Research Service (PIRS), *Poverty Reduction Strategies in Quebec and in Newfoundland and Labrador*, describes the legislation as establishing "'a national strategy to combat poverty and social exclusion' that 'is intended to progressively make Quebec, by 2013, one of the industrialized nations having the least number of persons living in poverty'" (Collin, 2007:2, citing *An Act to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion*, R.S.Q. L-7, c. II, s. 4).

According to the PIRS report, the Act requires the provincial government to develop a comprehensive action plan for reducing poverty with specific targets and evaluation measures and the Minister of Employment and Social Solidarity to submit an annual progress report for activities undertaken under the action plan. The Act also calls for the establishment of an advisory committee on the prevention of poverty and social exclusion, a research centre on poverty and social exclusion, and a fund to support social initiatives dedicated to combating poverty and social exclusion

To fulfil these obligations, the Quebec government allocated $2.5 billion over five years in its 2004-2005 Budget toward the anti-poverty initiatives outlined in its poverty action plan. Many of these initiatives were economic, such as adjustments to social assistance benefits, a minimum wage increase and a new refundable tax credit for low-income families with children. Other proposals focused on the social context of poverty, such as improved access to affordable housing, the settlement of immigrants and members of visible minority groups, the continued development of high-quality early learning and child care services, support programs for young parents and children, and programs to support academic success and literacy programs in underprivileged areas.

The Quebec government has continued to expand funding for anti-poverty programs. For example, its 2008-2009 Budget Plan, "… stipulates the creation of a new $400-million fund over ten years for projects that foster the development of children age 5 and under living in poverty. The new fund will receive $15 million per year from the government and $25 million per year from the Fondation Lucie et André Chagnon, for a total of $400 million over the next ten years. The government's contribution to the fund will be paid out of tobacco tax revenues" (Quebec, 2008: E. 53).

It is premature to judge the success of Quebec's poverty and social exclusion strategy when it is still five years from its target completion date. It is true that the overall proportion of Quebec's population living on low incomes fell steadily from 1997 to 2005, but the PIRS report cited above claims the main reason for this decrease is economic growth (Collin, 2007: 7). We believe, however, that Quebec has shown vision and leadership by making poverty reduction a provincial priority and by following through with the resources and supports to ensure that its comprehensive reforms are implemented.

Newfoundland and Labrador

As with the previous section, the following program descriptions are based on the PIRS report cited above.

The report notes that in December 2006, Newfoundland and Labrador became the second province to adopt a comprehensive poverty reduction strategy, which aims to transform the province from the highest-poverty region in Canada to the lowest by 2016. In its 2005 Budget speech, even prior to official adoption of the strategy, the government said it would address "the connections between poverty and gender, education, housing, employment, health, social and financial supports, and tax measures, as well as the link between women's poverty and their increased vulnerability to violence" (Newfoundland and Labrador, 2005, cited in Collin, 2005). The action plan flowing from the strategy set as goals improving access and coordination of services for those with low incomes, establishing a stronger social safety net, improving earned incomes, increasing emphasis on early childhood development and taking steps to improve education levels. Much as in Quebec, Newfoundland and Labrador has undertaken a wide variety of initiatives, ranging from local programs to systemic changes, to reach these goals. With commitments made in its 2008 Budget, the government has earmarked an annualized investment of more than $100 million to achieve its goals (Newfoundland and Labrador, Budget speech, 2008).

The United Kingdom

While the two Canadian provinces provided us with a perspective on comprehensive anti-poverty initiatives, the United Kingdom's experience provided us with valuable perspectives on both poverty and racism.

Poverty

In 1999, Britain's then Prime Minister Tony Blair publicly committed to reduce child poverty by one-quarter by 2004, by one-half by 2010 and completely by 2020. To achieve these goals, the British government developed a broad strategy known as the National Action Plan on Social Exclusion aimed at fighting child poverty through four key strategies: helping parents to access and participate in the workforce, providing financial support for families, ensuring children have access to excellent public services and supporting parents in their parenting role.

To give effect to these strategies, the government implemented critical policy initiatives, including substantially restructuring the tax system and providing tax credits for low-income families, providing parents with subsidies for child care and continuing education, expanding the length and compensation for parental leave and increasing the programming available for children in low-income communities. Britain also incorporated a race equality agenda in all its initiatives to address the racial realities of poverty. Specific funding is set aside to ensure that programs are serving the racialized poor throughout all levels of government and within local area partnerships.

The results of this comprehensive effort have been impressive. By 2004, Britain had increased financial support for children by £10.4 billion, or 72 per cent. Other initiatives helped about 410,000 single parents enter the workforce, while the number of children in families without jobs fell by 400,000. Overall, Britain reduced the number of children in poverty by 700,000, or 17 per cent, by 2004-05, the end of the first five years of the strategy (Child Poverty Action Group, March 2006). While this fell short of the first five-year target of a 25-per-cent reduction, it was seen by many as a significant accomplishment, and as an indication of the ways in which a commitment to targets can lead to action. Perhaps even more tellingly, in March 2008, and in the face of an economic downturn, the United Kingdom government renewed its commitment to the 2010 target of a 50-per-cent reduction. In doing so, the Chancellor of the Exchequer said:

> Even in today's difficult and uncertain times, we are determined that we will not be diverted from our long-term aim — to equip our country for the challenges of the future, confront climate change and to end child poverty in this generation.
>
> *(Hansard, March 12, 2008)*

Although many of Britain's anti-poverty programs are still under evaluation, these preliminary outcomes suggest that a comprehensive, long-term poverty strategy can have a direct and profound impact upon the lives and opportunities of thousands of families and their children.

Racism

In addition to the anti-poverty measures mentioned above, the United Kingdom has also been grappling with other aspects of racial inclusion. Its Black and other minority ethnic groups experience issues similar to those in Ontario, such as racial profiling, employment barriers, poor housing, marginalization, underachievement of racialised students and the overrepresentation of minorities within the criminal justice system. Britain is also dealing with neighbourhoods of poverty and with rising youth crime. Two programs that demonstrate how the United Kingdom is responding to these challenges are outlined below.

Neighbourhood Renewal

In 2001, the United Kingdom adopted its *Commitment to Neighbourhood Renewal: National Strategy Action Plan*. This renewal strategy is based on five key factors relating to urban deprivation: unemployment, crime, education failure, health and poor housing standards.

To ensure the strategy helps those it is intended to benefit, the government agency implementing the strategy adopted a Race Equality Action Plan that requires two things: race equality must be an integral component of the strategy, and Blacks and minority ethnic groups must benefit from this strategy. This is reflected not only in high-level policies, but also at every level of the service delivery. The hallmarks of the plan are:

- An expectation that neighbourhood renewal policies are delivering on the government's main targets and are meeting the needs of diverse communities
- Blacks and minority ethnic groups are employed in local Neighbourhood Renewal Units and in the partnership organizations that deliver key programs
- Blacks and minority ethnic groups are represented on decision-making bodies in their neighbourhoods, and
- Public service performance management systems use an evidence-based approach to demonstrate that Blacks and minority ethnic groups are benefiting from the neighbourhood renewal programs and to highlight differences among the groups.

Home Office and Race Equality Action Plan

The Home Office, which is the United Kingdom's government department responsible for protecting the public from terrorism, crime and anti-social behaviour and which includes policing, adopted its Race Equality Action Plan in 2002. Some of the policing initiatives include:

- The joint development of a Race Equality Program by the Home Office, police chiefs and police associations that assesses policing policies for equality and seeks to better understand the lower retention rate for Black and minority ethnic group officers
- Action plans for the recruitment, retention and progression of Black and minority ethnic group officers
- The assessment of police candidates' attitudes towards race and diversity and encouraging local police services to use members of their local community in the recruitment process

- Race-based data collection to determine the percentage of Black and minority ethnic group staff in each level of employment from the junior grades to the leadership ranks
- Reporting this data and identifying areas of progress as well as areas that need improvement, and
- Reviewing police detention and search activities, including collecting data about age and race of detainees and whether detention resulted in charges.

Collection and Use of Data

One of the features we find most interesting about the United Kingdom's approach to both poverty and racism is its emphasis on the collection and reporting of race-based statistics. While in Ontario there has been a concern about collecting such data, Britain have been collecting data on many issues, including race, for years. It has continued to refine and develop methods for collecting this data and uses it to inform its programs, develop policy, direct expenditures and determine priorities. Ethno-racially based data is collected, monitored and shared publicly for education, the labour market, housing, health and personal social services, the criminal justice system, perceptions of community cohesion, and culture and sport.

The collection of race-based data played a key role in developing the United Kingdom's 2001 neighbourhood renewal strategy, outlined above. Furthermore, because the data have been collected over a long period of time, it is possible to monitor progress and judge the success of the strategy's initiatives.

For example, a recent study, *Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society* (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2007) evaluated the strategy's progress on race equality and community cohesion. In looking at the criminal justice system, it assessed disparities identified by people over the years by looking at statistics for stops and searches, arrests, prosecution and incarceration, and reports to the public of the information collected. Progress could be judged because of several key factors:

- The criminal justice system began collecting and publishing data on race and ethnicity through the Home Office in 1992.
- Data are collected from across the criminal justice system: police, Crown prosecution service, judges, magistrates, prisons, probation service and youth

courts. Reports use data from both official statistics and public surveys and include both direct measurements, such as number of arrests, number of prisoners and actual sentences, and perceptions of the sentences and crimes committed.

- The data are finely divided and reflect the experience of suspects, defendants and prisoners.
- The recording of ethno-racial identity for youth justice purposes is based on self-identification.

(This last point requires some clarification. Prior to April 2003, subjects were assigned to an ethno-racial group based on the perception of the person collecting the data during "stops and searches" and arrests. When it became mandatory in April 2003 for all police services to record ethnicity, a standard system of recording was introduced into all agencies. A subject now identifies his or her ethno-racial group by choosing one of 16 categories used in the 2001 census. This allows direct comparisons between criminal justice data and census data.)

The data measured a broad range of variables, including attitudes towards crime based on how Blacks and marginalized ethnics perceived criminal justice agencies; confidence in the criminal justice system; worry about crime; experiences of crime; number of homicides; racist incidents (hate crimes); experiences of suspects; numbers of stops and searches; arrests and charges; types of offences; cautions and proceedings; sentencing, including percentage tried and convicted, acquittals, pleas; statistics concerning young offenders, such as bail conditions for each ethno-racial group; the prison population; and employment in the criminal justice system (police officers, prison officers, courts and Crown prosecution service) and ethnic representation in each category.

This wealth of data provided a means for the United Kingdom to determine where it had made progress and what challenges it faced in reaching the objective of reducing race inequalities and building community cohesion. For example, the data show young Blacks are overrepresented in the offender category and in the prison population. The government, based on this finding, has charged its Youth Justice Board with implementing action plans to achieve equal treatment at local levels for comparable offences by different ethnic groups and to deliver targeted prevention activity that substantially reduces local differences by ethnicity in recorded conviction rates.

This example demonstrates the United Kingdom's commitment to improving its data collection methods, ensuring greater consistency, ensuring the information is shared and used to enhance public service delivery and building community confidence in the process.

Section 3: An Inventory and Analysis of Ontario Programs

The Ontario government invests billions of dollars each year in programs for children and youth. Programs address child development, youth violence, youth at risk, and education and employment opportunities for young people. In our terms of reference, the Premier asked us to consider these provincial investments and programs.

In this section, we describe how we set about compiling an inventory of existing programs, some of the challenges this presented and, in general terms, what we learned about those programs. We provide some examples of Ontario programs drawn both from the inventory and our other consultations. Finally, we suggest ways of improving the effectiveness of Ontario's programs and services.

> "Consider existing provincial investments and programs related to child development, youth violence, youth at risk, and creating educational and employment opportunities for young people.
>
> - Assess approaches used in other jurisdictions to evaluate potential for successful application in Ontario's context.
>
> - Identify further opportunities for prevention and the rehabilitation of youth."
>
> - from the Terms of Reference of the Review of the Roots of Youth Violence

Program Inventory

To fulfil our mandate, we compiled an inventory of provincially funded programs. We were particularly interested in programs and services that

- Target youth violence
- Are directed to youth more generally
- Attempt to deal with root causes of violence and other negative behaviour at the family level
- Are of general application but, in the view of the ministries that fund or deliver them, help address the roots of youth violence.

We distributed a questionnaire (a sample is found in Appendix 4) to 14 ministries, asking them to fill out one form for each program. We thank these ministries for the invaluable information that they provided through their responses.

We also asked ministries, working through their transfer payment agencies or community groups that operate programs, to identify relevant programs in the eight neighbourhoods we visited in our Neighbourhood Insight Sessions (see Volume 3, Community Perspectives).

Our mandate is to analyze the underlying factors contributing to youth violence, not the consequences of violence that has already taken place. Our objective in conducting this program inventory was to obtain a sketch of relevant programs and services and to estimate the Ontario government's spending on them. However, it is important to note some limitations in the information we compiled.

- Although we gathered as much information as we could in the time available, a comprehensive survey was not within the scope or resources of our project.
- Because we asked ministries for information on programs operating across the province, and then again for programs in specific communities, it's possible that there is some duplication in the data, as a single program may have provided two responses.
- Ministries and government agencies applied their own criteria when deciding which of their programs address the roots of violence involving youth. They also maintain their records in many different ways. As a result, there are discrepancies with regard to the number of programs offered and their funding and other details.
- Data analysis was further complicated because many programs are funded and/or administered by more than one ministry (or their agencies), more than one level of government, in partnership with the private sector or non-profit organizations, or a combination of these entities.

By July 1, 2008, we had received 341 completed questionnaires. As noted above, we know this represents only a fraction of all government-funded, youth-related programs in a typical year. However, time precluded us from pursuing a more exhaustive inquiry.

The limitations notwithstanding, the program inventory exercise was a valuable one. The responses provide a valuable cross-section of the types of youth programs operating in the province. We believe that the database compiled through this review will serve as an important resource for policy-makers and researchers. The inventory also served to confirm our impression that a very large number of government-sponsored programs are seeking to address the roots of youth violence.

Types of Program Funding

Our inventory recorded government funding as falling within one of three types: institutional, granting and community. Each is described below.

Institutional Funding

We received 13 responses in this category, which captures significant, broadly based government strategies that address youth welfare and youth justice and are initiated in government departments or major organizations. As such, they reflect high-level government spending priorities. Each strategy includes numerous programs in its budget. For example, the 2007-08 budget for Child Protection Services was $1.3 billion, and the budget for youth justice secure custody for the same year was $105.3 million. Both strategies include multiple programs, but individual program details (including information about evaluations) were not provided.

Granting Programs

Fifty responses came from foundations, councils or other agencies that receive government funds, which they then allocate to the wider community through program grants. The Ontario Trillium Foundation, for example, receives approximately $100 million each year. It reviews grant proposals and ultimately distributes funds to well over 1,000 community grants in four sectors: arts and culture, the environment, human and social services, and sports and recreation. As with the institutional funding strategies responses, granting program responses did not capture specific programs.

Table 1 shows how the 50 granting programs distribute their funds.

Table 1: Grant Distribution by Program Type

PROGRAM TYPE	Number
Supporting Sports, Recreation, Arts or Cultural Programs (includes 13 that support only arts and culture programs)	27
Increasing Community Safety	5
Supporting General Youth Development through Mentorship, Counselling or Training	5
Assisting Suspended or Expelled Students	3
Supporting Anti-Bullying Initiatives	3
Supporting Youth Employment or Training Programs	3
Capital Grants Programs	2
Increasing Community Use of Schools	1
Supporting Early Childhood Development	1
TOTAL	**50**

The 2007-08 budgets for these granting programs ranged from $30,300 for Thunder Bay's Safer and Vital Communities Grant Program to over $1 billion for the Ministry of Children and Youth Service's Early Childhood Development programs.

Young people were involved in program design or delivery in nine (18 per cent) of these programs and in program administration in seven (14 per cent) of them. More than half of the 50 granting programs did not coordinate their activities with other government agencies.

Based on information in the 50 responses, it would appear that most granting programs have not been formally evaluated. (A discussion of evaluation methodologies and criteria was presented earlier in this chapter.) Eight (16 per cent) were evaluated by program or ministry staff and 14 (28 per cent) were evaluated by an outside consultant. Only seven (14 per cent) had produced a final evaluation report. Many of the evaluations focused exclusively on finances (whether grants were spent properly) or provided a general summary of program usage (e.g., the number of clients served by funded programs in a given year). The evaluations rarely examined whether the granting program had an impact on youth development, youth engagement or youth violence. Only one (two per cent) evaluation employed a pre-test/post-test design and only two (four per cent) used a control group.

Community Programs

Of the 341 responses we received, by far the largest number (278) described community programs active in the field. Some 60 per cent were offered throughout the province, with the balance offered only in specific communities.

Program Types

Table 2 shows the 278 community programs in our inventory by program type.

Table 2: Types of Community Programs Identified in the Inventory Exercise

PROGRAM TYPE	Number
Youth Centres	2
Sports/Recreation Programs	4
Anti-Violence Training Programs	5
Housing Assistance Programs	5
Substance Abuse Treatment	7
Health Centres/Healing Lodges	8
Anti-Bullying Programs	9
Mental Health Treatment Programs	11
Youth Justice/Diversion Programs	13
Community Education/Training	16
Arts and Culture Programs	21
Employment/Career Development	22
Early Childhood Development	29
Assistance for Crime Victims	37
Youth Development Programs	37
Family Violence Programs	52
TOTAL	**278**

Budget Ranges of Community Programs (per cent of the 278-program sample)

less than $50K:	19.7 per cent
$50K-100K:	21.4 per cent
$100K–500K:	23.2 per cent
$500K–$1 million:	8.9 per cent
$1 million +:	21.8 per cent
$10 million +:	3.2 per cent

Clients and Administration in Community Programs

	Range	Mean
Clients served annually	10 to 60,000	1,400
Age	Infants to seniors	24
Paid staff	0 to 378	56
Volunteers	0 to 275	12

Youth Involvement in Community Programs (per cent of the 278 programs)

Administration	13.5 per cent
Design	23.0 per cent
Implementation	38.5 per cent

Funding and Administration

Annual budgets for the 278 programs varied widely — from $5,750 for a public library children's and teens' services program to more than $394 million for the Children and Youth Mental Health Fund. Of these, 108 (38.8 per cent) had additional funding from sources other than the Ontario government.

Approximately 70 per cent had fewer than 10 paid staff. Almost half the responses received (48.0 per cent) did not specify the number of volunteers associated with the program. As with granting programs, youth involvement in community program development and implementation was quite limited.

Objectives

Most programs in our inventory had multiple objectives — an average of 7.8 major objectives per program. The majority of the objectives did not deal directly with the issue of youth violence, but rather with the root causes of violent behaviour. Some of the frequently cited objectives were "improve relations between youth and adults," "improve relations between young people," "improve levels of youth engagement" and "provide mentorship and role models to youth."

Coordination Among Agencies

Slightly more than half of the community programs in our inventory (54.0 per cent) indicated that they try to coordinate their activities with other agencies and organizations. The scope of this study did not allow for determining the extent of and effectiveness of coordination efforts, but this important issue could be the subject of a future study.

Evaluation

Table 3 summarizes our findings with respect to the evaluation of community programs. As noted above, a discussion of evaluation methodologies and criteria is provided earlier in this chapter.

Table 3: Program Evaluation

Method of evaluation	per cent*
◆ No evaluation	60
◆ Preliminary report	22
◆ Final report	17
◆ Evaluated by program staff	52
◆ Evaluated by ministry officials	31
◆ Evaluated by an outside consultant	21

* These numbers do not add up to 100 per cent because programs often used different combinations of evaluation processes. For example, 30 (10.8 per cent) of the 278 community programs in our inventory used a pre-test/post-test design, 24 (8.6 per cent) employed an outside researcher, and eight (2.9 per cent) used a control group in the evaluation. Six programs (2.2 per cent) were evaluated using the standard pre-test/post-test/control group design. Only three (1.1 per cent) of the 278 programs met all or most of the criteria listed earlier, using a pre-test/post-test/control group design and employing an independent consultant.

Section 4: Some Current Ontario Programs

In this final section of the chapter, we will highlight Ontario programs that have come to our attention through our program inventory discussed in Section 3, through our literature reviews or through our consultation processes. By mentioning programs here, we are not suggesting that they have been subject to high-quality evaluations or necessarily exhibit best practices. However, we think it is important to recognize that many funding agencies, and in particular the Ontario government, are supporting programs across the province, attempting to address the issues of concern to this review.

Poverty Reduction

We have identified poverty as one root of conditions that contribute to violence involving youth, so it is not surprising that we start this section with observations concerning Ontario government programs directed at poverty reduction.

The government is already active in this area; indeed, to demonstrate its efforts, it lists programs and services in the following areas: the Ontario Child Benefit, child care, early learning, education, health, skills training, minimum wage increases, affordable housing, social assistance and newcomers. Some of these are outlined in the appropriate sections below.

More significant, perhaps, is the fact that the government has established a Cabinet committee to develop "a focused strategy for reducing poverty, including associated indicators and targets." The result, it says, will be "a real, measurable poverty reduction plan." (Ontario, n.d.).

During the spring of 2008, as our review was completing its consultations, the Cabinet committee was visiting selected communities around Ontario, conducting its own set of consultations. The committee is scheduled to report by the end of 2008, and we can only hope that the plan it proposes is effective in addressing poverty, not only for its own sake, but also as a means of overcoming one of the key factors contributing to violence involving youth.

Education

Recent Policy Changes

We have discussed our concerns with Ontario's education system in Chapter 4, but we also acknowledge the Ministry of Education's recent initiatives, such as amending the *Education Act* to ensure children stay in school until age 18, expanding early childhood learning, raising literacy and numeracy skills, and increasing overall student achievement.

We also note that the ministry is continuing to implement a bullying prevention strategy, which was launched in November 2005. For example, in February 2008 the *Education Act* was amended to make bullying an infraction for which a suspension must be considered, and the ministry enacted a provincial policy that requires every school board to have its own policies and procedures on bullying prevention and intervention.

In one development of particular interest to our review, the ministry, in its February 2008 amendments to the *Education Act*, has recognized that the Act's original "safe schools" provisions had a disproportionate impact on racialized students and students with disabilities. Schools must now consider mitigating factors, often particularly relevant to racialized students and students with disabilities, before expelling or suspending a student. They must provide students who are expelled or placed on a long-term suspension (five days or more) with an alternative education program while they are not attending school. Parents or guardians must be notified of the length and reason for the suspension and the right of appeal, and there must be an investigation and report to the school board if expulsion is recommended. While it is too early to judge the overall effect of these changes, we believe they appear to be important steps in the right direction.

The ministry also reached an agreement with the Ontario Human Rights Commission that sets out a mutual commitment to ensuring that every student will reach the highest level of achievement that his or her ability and willingness to work hard permits. It tries to address concerns that curricula, guidance and counselling services, and teaching and administrative staffing have not been culturally sensitive or representative. For example, in accordance with the agreement, professional development for school board educators and support staff is expected to begin next spring. The training will focus on anti-racism, anti-homophobia, gender-based violence and all the grounds of prohibited discrimination in the *Ontario Human Rights Code*. The ministry's equity strategy, which we understand is about to be released, is designed to help boards, schools and the ministry create an inclusive education system, and promote and provide the conditions of acceptance and respect for all. This training will supplement existing diversity-related professional development, such as ministry-funded programs and workshops offered by teacher federations connecting equity issues across the curriculum, Aboriginal perspectives, anti-homophobia and anti-racism and related topics.

Another significant development is the recent initiative of the Toronto District School Board (TDSB), also as a result of an agreement with the Ontario Human Rights Commission, to collect more specific data on students. When this data collection indicated a 40-per-cent dropout rate among Black students, the TDSB announced measures to reduce the rate to 15 per cent within five years and to place extra youth workers and other staff to reach out to parents in 25 low-performing schools. We see this as a positive example demonstrating that racial data can be collected and used to effect change.

Education Funding

Ministry of Education

The provincial government spends a significant amount of money on education through operating grants to school boards and other programs designed to meet particular needs, and the amount has been increasing. For example, between 2003–04 and 2007–08, the Ministry of Education's operating grants to school boards grew by 27 per cent, from $9.3 billion to $11.8 billion, an average increase of more than five per cent per year in those five years.

The amounts mentioned above include Ministry of Education funding for several programs of interest to this review.

Learning Opportunities Grants

Grants totalling more than $400 million (2007–08) provide funding for school board programs to help students who show an elevated risk of poor academic achievement. Services include remedial reading, breakfast/lunch programs, tutors, before- and after-school programs, counsellors, education assistants, literacy and numeracy programs, and homework clubs.

Ontario Focused Intervention Partnership

With funding of $26.5 million (2007–08), this program provides support to elementary schools whose student achievement scores are low, static or declining.

Safe Schools Strategy

This program, with an investment of more than $70 million, provides several programs to help students feel safer in school and on school grounds. It includes the bullying prevention strategy mentioned earlier and other programs to reduce incidents of youth violence. The urban and priority high schools component of this program, introduced in the 2008 Ontario Budget, provides $10 million annually for selected urban secondary schools, with $200,000–$500,000 going to some 20-50 schools annually.

Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program

Offered through Ontario's secondary school system, this program provides cooperative education and workplace-based experiences in the skilled trades to high school students. It encourages young people to enter apprenticeship training while in school or after graduation, stay in school to complete high school diploma requirements, and enter other post-secondary programs leading to technical occupations, including those offered by community colleges. In 2006–07, the ministry provided $8.5 million for about 24,500 participants.

Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities

The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, in addition to operating grants for colleges and universities that are expected to total about $4 billion in each of 2007–08 and 2008–09, has other programs with a bearing on our area of interest.

First Generation Projects and Bursaries Program

This program provides funding for projects run by colleges, universities and community-based organizations that encourage first generation students (i.e., those whose parents did not participate in post-secondary studies) to pursue a post-secondary education. It also provides bursaries for first generation students in financial need who are attending Ontario universities or colleges of applied arts and technology. The government invested almost $10 million in First Generation Projects and Bursaries from 2005-07, and in June 2007 announced a further $30 million over the next three years; 10 per cent of that amount is for bursaries.

Grants for Crown Wards

Included in the First Generation Projects and Bursaries Program described above are grants for current and former Crown wards. In 2007–08, the ministry started reimbursing eligible post-secondary tuition fees for Crown wards and former Crown wards in the first two years of their programs. As of 2008–09, the ministry is extending Access Grants to years three and four, and to students enrolled in programs of two years or less. All of first year tuition is covered, and up to $3,000 in eligible expenses in the following years.

Student Assistance Programs

Student support programs, such as the Ontario Student Assistance Program, provide grants and loans to students with a demonstrated need. Funding for student support is estimated to be nearly $522 million in 2008–09.

Non-Government Programs

During our consultations, we learned of many programs that support Ontario's education system but do not fall under a provincial ministry, although they may receive some of their funding from government sources. Some provide before- and after-school activities, some are active in the classroom, and some provide mentoring. Here are three such programs, as a sample of what's available in Ontario communities.

Frontier College

Founded in 1899, Frontier College's first mission was to send "labourer-teachers" to work and teach in Canada's frontier regions. These individuals provided education and training to a labour force that was mostly uneducated, illiterate and often exploited.

Frontier College expanded its mandate after the Second World War, and today, it continues to provide tutoring and literacy programs with a particular emphasis on supporting marginalized individuals and communities across the country.

Among these programs are several focused on supporting vulnerable youth. For example, Beat the Street offers literacy upgrading, a General Educational Development

(GED) preparation course and computer skills training to street youth in Toronto. Its objectives include providing the skills and knowledge that will:

- Increase their self-esteem
- Allow them to better their circumstances through broader opportunities for education, employment and personal development, and
- Assist in their transition from homelessness.

Frontier College also runs Aboriginal Literacy Summer Camps for children and youth ages 6–16 in First Nation communities in northern Ontario. Each three-week camp provides various literacy-based activities, such as reading, writing and singing, that incorporate and celebrate the traditions and cultures of each community. Parents, elders and other community members all participate in the camps.

The college works with community-based groups and organizations to set up Homework Clubs for children and teenagers. At Homework Clubs, students meet with volunteer tutors to read books, write stories, do homework, play word games — anything that will improve their reading and writing abilities. Tutors and students meet at least weekly. These relationships both improve the students' literacy skills and, critically, provide them with a positive attachment to an older mentor.

Breaking the Cycle

Breaking the Cycle (www.cantraining.org/BTC/btc.php) is a youth gang exit and leadership project developed by the Canadian Training Institute, a Toronto-based not-for-profit organization that undertakes research, provides training and develops projects involving the criminal justice system and related disciplines. It recruits youth ages 15 to 23 who are or have been involved in youth gang activity, and who are unemployed or not attending school. Still in the pilot stage, the project gives priority to residents of Toronto's North Etobicoke neighbourhood.

Participants receive two weeks of intensive training and one week of followup sessions designed to make it more likely that they will leave or remain away from gangs, resist using alcohol or other drugs, make more pro-social lifestyle choices and resolve conflicts without resorting to violence. Overall, the program aims to improve participants' chances of success in school, training or employment.

Following the initial sessions, participants may choose to return to school or seek employment. Others, however, have the opportunity of participating in a further 25-week program with additional training and peer support. Called the Youth Ambassador Employment Preparation Project, this second phase of Breaking the Cycle allows youth to develop their leadership skills while working in the community at a variety of anti-youth gang initiatives, including making presentations or being part of planning groups.

Roots of Empathy

Roots of Empathy works toward reducing bullying and aggression among school children by raising their social and emotional competence and increasing empathy. It is run primarily in kindergarten to Grade 8 at participating schools. Rather than targeting the victims of bullying, the program focuses on helping all children gain insight into how others feel and develop a sense of social responsibility. It has resulted in a dramatic decrease in bullying in participating schools.

A neighbourhood parent visits a classroom with an infant every three weeks during the school year. An instructor coaches the students in observing the baby's development and identifying the baby's feelings, thus using the baby's actions and emotions to help children develop "emotional literacy." Social inclusion and consensus-building are also built into the discussions. To encourage awareness of cultural and ethnic diversity, the baby and parent are often of different ethnicities from the students. The children also have the opportunity to observe responsible and loving parenting.

Health

The Ontario government delivers health programs primarily through two ministries, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, and the Ministry of Health Promotion. Health is the largest single category of spending for the government.

Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

Public Health Units

The ministry provides more than $527 million for Ontario's 36 public health units. These services include programs related to children and youth, such as healthy lifestyles, communicable disease control (including education ranging from West Nile virus to sexually transmitted diseases and AIDS), immunization and healthy growth and development (including parenting education). They also offer health education for all age groups.

Community Health Centres

There are 54 Community Health Centres across the province. Their programs address the risks associated with poverty through prenatal/postnatal support programs. Other programs include sponsorship of community kitchens and food-buying cooperatives, self-help groups related to family violence, drop-ins for street youth and support to find employment and family counselling. The ministry's total spending in 2006–07 for all Community Health Centres was over $193 million. The centres may also apply for funding from other sources.

Ministry of Health Promotion

Dental Care for Low-Income Families

The ministry has four programs providing dental care for low-income families and their children, with total spending of over $220 million.

Healthy Eating and Active Living Strategy

This ministry program provides $10 million annually to fund programs intended to reduce child obesity. The ministry's Communities in Action Fund provides grants totalling $7.5 million annually to non-government organizations that seek to increase participation in community sport, recreation and physical activity.

Mental Health

Ministry of Children and Youth

The Ministry of Children and Youth Services has been steadily increasing its budget related to the mental health of children and youth. In 2008–09, the estimate increased by more than $20 million to about $444 million.

Mental Health Centres

The ministry operates two centres directly (the Child and Parent Resource Institute in London and Thistletown Regional Centre in Toronto) for children and youth up to age 18 who have social, emotional, behavioural or psychiatric problems. The ministry also provides funding to numerous centres and hospital-based outpatient programs for assessment; counselling; individual, group and family treatment; and parent education and support.

Non-Government Programs

As noted earlier under Education, we often learned about programs that support youth activities that do not fall under a provincial ministry, although they may receive some government funding. Here are two more in that category.

Stop Now and Plan (SNAP)

SNAP addresses angry, aggressive, and anti-social behaviour in children. It also targets children at risk of entering the youth justice system and thus fills a gap in the availability of mental health services for young children in conflict with the law. Both conditions are being seen in children at increasingly earlier ages. The program teaches children to think before they act and to identify and control their behaviour. It also helps parents to learn to apply appropriate and helpful discipline.

SNAP is one component of a three-stage approach to help children who are showing aggressive and anti-social behaviours. The components are:

- Police/community protocols that direct children to appropriate services in a timely manner
- Structured clinical assessment to ascertain the risk of anti-social potential and treatment needs
- The SNAP program itself, to meet the clinical needs of aggressive and anti-social children and their families.

The evaluation of SNAP has been favourable. It has been recognized as an exemplary program and is being used internationally. However, it is not yet widely available in Ontario.

CAMH Substance Abuse Program

The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) in Toronto offers the Substance Abuse Program for African-Canadian and Caribbean Youth. It offers culturally sensitive supports for Black youth ages 13-24 and their families, including assessment, family support, community-based youth groups, presentations on alcohol and other drugs, mental health services and youth advocacy. All program staff are of African or Caribbean heritage and are trained to address substance abuse and mental health issues specific to Black youth and their families. A Program Advisory Committee (university professors, doctors, directors, consultants, parents, youth workers and lawyers) representing the African-Canadian and Caribbean community guides the program.

Youth Justice

Three Ontario ministries fund different parts of the youth criminal justice system in Ontario: the Ministry of the Attorney General, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services and the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services.

The Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services oversees policing in Ontario. However, costs concerning youth-related programs, including those of the Ontario Provincial Police and municipal police, are not aggregated at the provincial level. We do know, however, that according to the Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, the total cost of policing in Ontario in 2006 was $3.4 billion. Some elements of the youth justice system attribute about 10 per cent of their total costs to youth programs, while others suggest estimates of up to 25 per cent. On that basis, we have chosen a middle ground and are choosing to estimate the cost of youth-related police activities in Ontario at $500 million. We must emphasize that this is only an approximation.

Based on data from the other two ministries, we were able to identify an additional $355 million in funding associated with youth justice. Details are provided in the following table.

Table 4: Government of Ontario Justice System Funding Associated With Youth

Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services	
Policing Costs (estimated)	$500 million
Ministry of the Attorney General:	
Court Services	$28 million
Prosecutions	$30 million
Legal Aid	$17 million
Youth Justice Committees	$4 million
Ministry of Children and Youth Services:	
Custody*	$163 million
Probation	$40 million
Diversion	$22 million
Alternatives to Custody	$28 million
Community Programs	$22 million
African Canadian Youth Justice program	$0.7 million
* Includes cost of open and secure custody and pretrial detention	
Estimated Total Spending	$854.7 million

The following are a few of the programs that contribute to this amount.

Alternatives to Custody, Community Intervention and Reintegration Programs

The Ministry of Children and Youth Services operates 156 programs related to alternatives to custody and community interventions, including restorative justice, extra-judicial measures, attendance centres and reintegration programs. In 2007–08, there were 184 programs with an estimated budget of more than $28 million. Diversion programs in 2007–08 accounted for a further $22 million.

The ministry funds other community programs and services, such as youth mental health court workers, community service orders and other reintegration programs. After serving more than 14,000 youth in 2006–07, the ministry reorganized the programs for 2007–08, resulting in 194 programs and an estimated budget of nearly $22 million.

Youth Justice Committees

The Ministry of the Attorney General funds youth justice committees in an effort to reduce repeat offences. The committees are made up of volunteers in the community who work with local agencies and participants in the criminal justice system.

Youth justice committees may become involved when a young person, aged 12-17, is alleged to have committed a low-risk offence. Police may refer the young person to a committee before, or the Crown may refer after, a charge is laid. The youth must be willing to participate in the program, be aware of his or her rights and options and be prepared to accept accountability.

Regardless of the source of the referral, the youth justice committee will bring together the youth, his or her parent or parents, the victim and trained members of the community. In each case, they negotiate an appropriate way for the young person to make amends. This can include an apology, community service, a written project, paying back or doing tasks for the victim, and/or voluntary participation in counselling programs such as anger-management.

There are 57 youth justice committees in Ontario. Each is eligible for up to $70,000 per year, with a total program expenditure of more than $4 million annually. In 2007, the last year for which statistics are available, there were almost 3,200 referrals to these committees.

Community Policing and Crime Prevention

Although, as stated earlier, our estimate for youth-related policing costs is only an approximation, we know that police services do devote substantial resources to youth programs.

For example, through its $30-million Community Policing and Crime Prevention Grants program, the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services provides a large number of small grants, which fund counselling, drug awareness and other programs. The amount of funding for youth programming under this initiative varies from year to year.

Other Police Programs

Project PEACE

Project PEACE (Public Education And Crime Eradication) is an initiative of the Toronto Police Service to keep guns out of the hands of youth and youth out of the reach of gangs. Police officers work at the community level with young people, schools and community groups to develop strategies to keep youth away from guns and gangs and make communities safer. Launched in 2005 with funding from the provincial government, Project PEACE now has funding from other partners, including the National Crime Prevention Centre.

One of its early initiatives was a gun amnesty in November 2005, which sought to remove illegal firearms from the streets. Police collected 261 guns and 1,554 rounds of ammunition.

Working with youth, Project PEACE has developed videos, education programs and workshops that address violence. It promotes alternatives to gun violence and demonstrates peaceful conflict resolution. It encourages youth to contribute their ideas, time and energy to work with police and community leaders to help create positive change in their neighbourhoods.

CyberCops

The Ontario Provincial Police has developed several strategies to help protect youth from Internet predators. For example, the OPP's Youth Issues Unit has a website, (www.opp.ca/Community/CrimePrevention/opp_000273.html), with tip sheets and other information for children and their parents.

OPP staff also played an active role in bringing a B.C.-based interactive software program called CyberCops to Ontario. CyberCops uses games to educate children in grades 7 and 8 about the techniques that criminals use to entice and entrap children and youth into dangerous situations. The games challenge children to solve a crime based on a real-life situation. Teachers guide the classroom discussion about Internet safety, including the dangers of cyber-stalking, child pornography, fraud and bullying.

The OPP helped develop content for CyberCops in Ontario and, in partnership with the Ontario Physical and Health Education Association, delivered training to teachers on its use. The Ontario government provided financial support for development of CyberCops and distribution across the province to schools, OPP detachments and municipal police services.

Non-Government Programs

Legal Assistance

Legal Aid Ontario (LAO) receives funding from the Ontario government (and other sources) to provide legal assistance to low-income people. There are several different ways of accessing legal aid services.

- Legal aid clinics provide services in poverty law (income maintenance, landlord and tenant disputes, etc.)
- Duty counsel provides assistance to those appearing in Court without a lawyer. In 2007-08, about $1.8 million was spent assisting 75,534 youth.
- Staff offices provide assistance in criminal, family and immigration law in a few locations.

However, most Legal Aid Ontario funds are used in a program that provides persons who qualify for legal aid with a certificate that allows them to retain a lawyer from the private bar. Of the $98 million provided for legal assistance through criminal case certificates in 2007-08, $12.8 million related to 9,798 certificates for young offenders.

Also in 2007-08, Legal Aid Ontario provided approximately $600,000 for the Justice for Children and Youth specialty clinic.

African Canadian Legal Clinic

The African Canadian Youth Justice Program serves African-Canadian youth, aged 12-17, who are involved in the justice system in the Greater Toronto Area. Launched in 2006 and delivered by the African Canadian Legal Clinic, the program helps youth understand their rights and responsibilities and connects them and their families with community resources and supports. Youth justice workers help young people navigate the court process, and social workers assist in their successful reintegration into the community. The program receives provincial and federal funding.

The Toronto-based African Canadian Legal Clinic was established in 1994 and is funded by Legal Aid Ontario. It takes on test cases involving racial discrimination that will have a broad impact on the African-Canadian community. It also advocates on behalf of the community, often in partnership with social justice organizations, and provides legal education. The clinic is a not-for-profit organization governed by an independent board of directors chosen from the community.

Early Childhood

Ministry of Children and Youth Services

As documented elsewhere in this report, influences on youth behaviour occur well before the school years. The Ministry of Children and Youth Services funds child care in partnership with the federal government, and provides child care subsidies ($841 million in 2007–08) and other income supports. Of interest to our review, it funds several early childhood development programs for a total of nearly $170 million (2007–08).

Healthy Babies, Healthy Children

Babies and mothers are screened to detect problems that could limit a child's abilities later in life, allowing early interventions. The program is delivered through public health units, and the cost is shared with municipalities. Other early years initiatives include programs involving preschool speech and language, infant hearing, blindness/low vision early intervention and infant development.

Early Years Centres

The ministry funds 105 Early Years Centres, some with satellite or mobile facilities, across the province for children up to age six and their parents or caregivers. Centres provide early learning activities, information about child development and referrals to other services; promote public awareness of the importance of the early years; and provide targeted programs to meet the needs of their at-risk communities.

Each centre receives about $500,000 in funding; program spending totals $65.3 million.

Families First (Peel Region)

Families First helps single, sole-support parents who are receiving welfare through Ontario Works to improve their financial position and reduce their reliance on health care and social assistance services. The program provides health and employment services and child care services to parents, and recreational opportunities for children. The program promotes healthy lifestyle activities, mental health, physical fitness, cognitive functioning and self-esteem for the children and youth. To date, over 3,000 parents who have received assistance through Ontario Works have been referred to Families First. Since July 2007, over 3,000 children have participated.

Child and Youth Protection

Ministry of Children and Youth Services

Children's Aid Societies

Through child welfare services, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services funds 53 children's aid societies across the province at an estimated cost of $1.38 billion in 2008–09. Children's aid societies have a broad mandate to investigate allegations of neglect and physical, emotional or sexual abuse, and to protect children living at home or in out-of-home placements through a variety of programs. They also place children for adoption.

Extended Care and Maintenance Program

Children's aid societies may provide care and maintenance for former Crown wards between the ages of 18 and 21 in the form of extended care and management programs. These programs provide financial and housing support, personal counselling, preparation for independence programs and access to aftercare workers based on assessment by a society. The cost of these programs are included in the overall children's aid society funding mentioned above.

Recognizing that youth leaving care have a difficult transition to make, the government announced new funding in June 2008 to help children and youth in the care of children's aid societies participate in learning and recreational programs that support their healthy development. The new funding, $11.5 million in 2008–09 increasing to $16.2 million in 2011–12, is the first step in a broader strategy to improve outcomes for children and youth in care. Supports will include tutoring, skills-building and recreational activities. When fully implemented, the program will provide youth ages 15-17 with savings of up to $3,300, to be held in bank accounts they can access when they leave care. They will also receive money management training to give them the skills necessary to handle their savings responsibly.

Training and Employment

The Ontario government provides many training and employment programs through its ministries. The following are examples of the larger programs.

Learning, Earning and Parenting (LEAP)

A component of the Ontario Works program (administered by the Ministry of Community and Social Services), LEAP is designed for parents ages 16-21 who are on social assistance. LEAP helps young parents complete their education, improve their parenting skills and search for employment. It includes literacy screening and training, community participation to build skills, on-the-job experience, basic education and training, job skills training and employment placement services. Financial support is available for school-related expenses. Participants in LEAP can receive additional funding for child care, transportation, tutoring, school supplies, school clothing, field trips, recreational activities and graduation fees. The program also offers a cash incentive of $500, upon graduation, toward future educational pursuits. Participation in LEAP is mandatory for 16- and 17-year-old parents and voluntary for 18-21-year-old parents who have not completed high school. LEAP works closely with public health units and the Ontario Early Years Centres.

Job Connect

The Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, through Employment Ontario, provides $134 million (2007–08) for this career and employment preparation program for youth. Components of the program include employment counselling and job development. Employers who hire participating youth receive a training subsidy.

Summer Jobs Service

This program, also offered through the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, allocates more than $24 million (2007–08) for free training on how to develop job-search and self-marketing skills to help students land and keep jobs. It includes a $2-per-hour incentive for employers to hire a student.

Youth Opportunities Strategy

The Youth Opportunities Strategy of the Ministry of Children and Youth Services includes a number of programs to assist youth in obtaining employment. The largest of these is Summer Jobs for Youth, which provides pre-employment readiness, employment placements and post-employment supports for youth ages 15-18 in a variety of fields for up to eight weeks during the summer. Participants receive minimum wage plus statutory benefits. In 2007–08, this program invested more than $5 million. In the same year, the total budget for the Youth Opportunities Strategy (including a youth outreach worker, a youth-in-policing program and school-based prevention/diversion programs) was nearly $11 million.

Non-Government Programs

The Boreal Institute Youth Employment Program

This youth employment program, located at the Munk Centre for International Studies at the University of Toronto, consists of local pilot projects and a Youth Employment Community of Practice. The first local pilot project, Quick Start, was launched in 2006 with the YMCA of Greater Toronto. The YMCA recruits and trains the youth participants and places them in jobs linked with their goals. The Boreal Institute interviews youth participants, employers, job developers and community stakeholders at regular intervals to gather data on progress and provide feedback.

The Youth Employment Community of Practice brings together youth, employers, service agencies, government, small organizations and groups, policy-makers, granting agencies, unions, educational institutions, researchers, associations and networks, and other interested participants to share information and improve practices in expanding economically sustainable employment for youth experiencing social and economic exclusion.

Partnership to Advance Youth Employment (PAYE)

PAYE, a joint initiative of the City of Toronto, private sector employers and community organizations, helps find jobs for youth up to age 29 from neighbourhoods the City of Toronto has identified as having the greatest need of economic development and social services. Businesses, organizations and individuals provide jobs and act as mentors and role models to the participants. City of Toronto staff provide support and help match youth to employment opportunities. Community-based agencies provide guidance and support for youth in acquiring and maintaining employment.

In 2007, PAYE found jobs for 39 youth at 29 employers. It provided employment advice to 100 more. Two received bursaries for further education. Numbers aren't available for 2008, but the program has expanded and plans to hold recruitment information sessions in Flemingdon Park-Victoria Village, Crescent Town, Kingston-Galloway, Kennedy Park-Eglinton East and Scarborough Village.

Youth Employment Services (YES)

YES was founded by the Rotary Club in 1968 and claims to be Canada's oldest youth employment service. Now, much of its funding comes from the Ontario government's Job Connect program and other provincial grants, but it also receives funding from the federal government and the City of Toronto. It has five locations across the city offering a range of employment counselling and placement services.

Youth learn about YES through word of mouth or by being referred from a Probation and Parole Office or a social service agency. The process, which may last two to 10 weeks, starts with an assessment of the individual's needs. From there, they could go to a "job camp," a five-week program designed to overcome barriers to employment, or they could be teamed with a job developer to start their job search.

YES reports a better than 80-per-cent success rate at placing candidates in jobs, with almost 70 per cent of them still on the job after three months. It has helped more than 40,000 young people since it was established.

The Phoenix Print Shop

This non-profit commercial print shop and training facility is located at a Toronto shelter for youth ages 15-30. Launched in 2002, the print shop gives homeless and at-risk youth the opportunity to learn basic skills (punctuality, work ethic, etc.) and obtain hands-on training in printing. They receive a three-month introduction to the print industry and a paid work placement for a minimum of a further three months. Followup supports are provided for at least two years, including professional development workshops, eligibility for $1,000 per year from the Phoenix Scholarship Fund to assist in career development or academic study, and other personal and job-related services. The print shop's website says that, since startup, it has "connected over 100 youth with career building opportunities in the vibrant graphic communications sector. Over 80 per cent of youth who complete Foundations of Print connect with full-time work." (http://phoenixprintshop.ca)

Sports, Arts and Cultural Programs

We believe that sports, arts and cultural programs can have significant and positive impacts on the development of youth, in that they can instil a sense of community and promote mutual reliance, from which a sense of self-worth and individual responsibility develops. Sports and arts programs also provide a context for setting goals and seeing the relationship between effort and results. Success in these programs can increase confidence and self-esteem among participants.

Many of the programs described below are offered in neighbourhoods that we visited during our consultations, and all include components that the academic literature identifies as important for maximizing the benefits of sports, arts and cultural programs.

Youth Serving Agencies Network's GROW Program

This program funds year-round recreation opportunities for children from low-income families on social assistance in Hamilton. A coordinator visits the home to assess the family's circumstances and needs and can help the family to overcome language barriers, cover transportation costs and pay registration fees. About 60 per cent of the subsidized programs involve sports and about 40 per cent, arts.

Somali Youth Basketball League

The Somali Youth Basketball League has operated in Ottawa for seven years and now has 14 teams across the city. Its objective is to promote good relations and a sense of community among youth and young adults from Somali and non-Somali backgrounds, and between them and the surrounding community. Participation encourages social interaction, cultural integration, teamwork, cooperation, communication and a sense of accomplishment. The youth at our consultations noted the league's importance in creating networks and providing opportunities to meet youth from other parts of the city.

Arts & Heritage for All

The Community Arts and Heritage Education Project has operated Arts & Heritage for All in Thunder Bay for two years. Each year, the program brings together six organizations to develop and implement an arts and heritage program for excluded children and youth. Participating organizations include the local Boys and Girls Club, residential treatment facilities, organizations that deal with youth in secure and open custody and agencies serving young single mothers.

Children and youth choose the projects they would like to work on, ensuring that they will be engaged in projects that best serve their needs and creative energies. The program not only increases access to the arts, but also uses the arts to assist children and youth in learning about teamwork, leadership and creative and critical thinking skills.

Regent Park School of Music

Founded in 1999, the school currently (spring 2008) has 275 students in Toronto's Regent Park. Disadvantaged children and youth ages three to 16 study music and learn to play musical instruments. They also have a choir and several small musical ensembles. Two years ago, the program created a satellite location in the Jane-Finch area, where about 100 students are learning to play piano, violin and steel drums. The music lessons are almost totally subsidized. The school also offers bursaries and scholarships and covers the cost of Royal Conservatory of Music examinations and music books.

While the students are learning music, they are also acquiring self-discipline, taking pride in their accomplishments and having positive relationships with their adult teachers. Many of the students continue in the school for several years. Students who may not otherwise have had the opportunity have gone on to attend arts high schools and college and university music programs. About 90 per cent of the school's graduates have gone on to post-secondary education.

Youth Engagement

Grassroots Youth Collaborative

This organization is a collective of 11 culturally and racially diverse youth-led organizations working in underserved, lower-income, at-risk communities in Toronto. Member organizations reach out to young people who are typically missed by mainstream youth programming. To become a member of the Grassroots Youth Collaborative, youth ages 13-29 must be represented in all areas of the applicant organization, including positions of authority and the board of directors. Youth must also account for at least half of the organization's volunteers and staff.

ArtReach Toronto

ArtReach Toronto Funders Collaborative is a group of arts funding agencies that includes all three levels of government. ArtReach Toronto funds projects to engage youth in underserved areas of Toronto in the arts, supporting innovative youth projects that may not have support from elsewhere. It encourages youth to take the lead in defining what art means to them and what they need from the program to achieve their goals. Guided by the principle that funding should to be accessible to youth directly, the program places ownership of projects in their hands. Youth helped to develop the program and continue to play a significant role in the granting process.

Ontario Young People's Alliance

This provincial network promotes civic engagement among Ontario's youth. The members are individual youth, youth-led organizations and adult-led organizations committed to strong youth programming and capacity-building. The alliance creates spaces for young people to share information, network and mobilize around issues that concern them. A "ProvincePak" with information about member activities is mailed to all members, and members can share information electronically through "MatchList." The alliance provides youth workshops on topics such as developing and facilitating workshops, public speaking, moderating panel discussions, and organizing events and conferences to enhance their community initiatives.

Peel Youth Village

Engaging youth means making them feel part of their overall community, and that's what's happening at the Peel Youth Village Project. Located in Mississauga's Acorn neighbourhood and opened in 2005, the village offers a new model for inclusive, mixed-use community development. It provides housing to 48 youth who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, and includes a full-service community centre for all local residents.

Local youth provided considerable input into the design of the facility, along with about 45 youth-serving agencies. A unique partnership of the three levels of government (including contributions from the National Homelessness Initiative and federal and provincial rental housing programs) funded the construction, and local corporate sponsors and collaborations helped to minimize development and construction costs. The local YMCA provides all on-site services to youth residents and community members.

Throughout this report, we have emphasized the importance of breaking down the feelings of isolation and hopelessness that can lead youth to violent behaviour. By linking at-risk youth with their communities and to comprehensive support mechanisms, the Peel Youth Village achieves this. There is no physical or programming separation between youth living in the village and the greater community, sending a powerful message that the youth are part of the community, and important assets to the community and its future.

Settlement Services

In many of our consultations, we heard about the particular problems of newcomers to our communities and the need for more services to help them adapt to their new homes. While there is no doubt this is true, it would be wrong to suggest that there are no such services already working in this area. The following are just a few examples.

YMCA Newcomer Youth Integration Program

This project focuses on youth ages 13-17 who have come to Canada within the last two years. The 12-hour program, offered on weekends, includes information sessions and recreational activities to help youth integrate into their new communities and make healthy choices when faced with decisions.

Multicultural Liaison Officer Program

Operated by the Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization, this program helps immigrant children integrate successfully into Ottawa's school system. Services are delivered directly in schools and other community locations. Multicultural liaison officers work with newcomer parents and students, ensuring that they understand their new school environment. They also work with school staff so that they are aware of the perspectives of newcomer parents. They can provide language and cultural interpretation at staff/parent/student meetings and referrals to settlement organizations, and they liaise with community organizations to improve access to community services for immigrant families.

Settlement Workers in Schools Project

Operating in six communities in Ontario, the Settlement Workers in Schools Project is a partnership of settlement agencies, boards of education and Citizenship and Immigration Canada. It works with newcomer families to familiarize them with the school system and community resources. Settlement workers contact all newcomer families to provide essential school information, referring families to appropriate school staff and to specific community services that can help ease their transition. Settlement workers in high schools also assist newcomer youth directly.

CultureLink's Host Program

The CultureLink's Host program in central Toronto matches immigrants with volunteers who can assist them with ordinary social, commercial, education and employment activities for four to six months. The time and friendship of the volunteers helps to ease the frustration and loneliness that newcomers often experience. The program includes a Newcomer Youth Centre, where youth can learn about community services and resources. Youth workers are available to talk with them and offer support, advice and information.

Conclusion

The Strengths of Ontario's Current Approach

In this chapter, we have looked at the process for evaluating programs and described several that appear to be "proven" or "promising." We also looked at approaches in several other jurisdictions, most notably the United Kingdom. Finally, we examined programs and spending in Ontario.

Combining the characteristics of successful, evaluated programs with our program inventory suggests that, in general, Ontario is supporting the types of programs that the academic literature has identified as either proven or promising. The research shows that, under the right circumstances, the following types of programs can significantly reduce youth involvement in crime and violence:

- Early childhood development
- Early intervention
- Anti-bullying
- Employment
- Sports and recreation
- Arts and culture
- Adult mentoring
- Reducing family violence
- Parent training
- Certain school-based initiatives

Furthermore, the Ontario government should be commended for moving away from many crime prevention measures that the literature has revealed as ineffective. For example, after a brief period of experimentation, it has withdrawn support for "boot camp" programs, and zero-tolerance policies in school boards are being amended.

Gaps in Ontario's Approach to Program Funding

We are concerned, however, with the lack of high-quality evaluation in Ontario programs. We do not really know whether they are being implemented properly according to best practices, or whether high-quality programs are reaching all youth who need specific services.

Our analysis identified three potential gaps in Ontario's violence prevention approach:

- Lack of high-quality evaluation

- Inadequate coordination among agencies and programs
- Lack of a coherent program funding strategy.

Lack of high-quality evaluation

Ontario has thousands of individual community programs that target youth, many of which have multiple goals or objectives in addition to reducing youth violence. Indeed, our inventory tells us that, on average, community programs have 7.8 major objectives. We also know, based on our sample, that almost 60 per cent of these programs carry out no evaluation at all, and only about two per cent are subject to an evaluation that comes close to being considered "high-quality." Thus, despite their very laudable intentions, we have very little concrete evidence that these programs actually attain their objectives.

It is true that recipients of funding often resist thorough program evaluation. High-quality evaluation is expensive, and many program administrators argue that they would rather spend limited funds on program implementation and service delivery. Moreover, poor evaluation results could make it difficult to obtain future program funding, and funding agencies may be reluctant to press for evaluations to avoid criticism for supporting ineffective programs. We believe the latter two objections are more than outweighed by the benefit programs and funders could reap from high-quality evaluations. They should not be seen as a means of administering punishment, but rather as a tool for continuous improvement.

Inadequate coordination among agencies and programs

As noted, millions of dollars are distributed every year to hundreds of Ontario community organizations for developing and implementing programs to meet the needs of young people and their families. Our survey results indicate that only a little more than half of these agencies, 54 per cent, try to coordinate their activities with other agencies and organizations. One reason for this, we were told, is that agencies all too often see themselves as competitors for scarce resources. Funding organizations seldom do anything to require, or even encourage, collaboration and cooperation. As a result, there is little integration of programs and service delivery is often fragmented.

Our program inventory exercise also revealed the difficulty of compiling a complete list of the programs and services available to young people. Parents and youth must find it even more difficult than we did to identify and access the full range of programs that could meet their needs, as there is no single source of this information. Some community groups have compiled their own local directories of services, and we commend them for these efforts, but we believe a provincial clearing house would also be important.

Lack of a coherent program funding strategy

Lack of coordination between agencies can also lead to inefficient funding practices. We found numerous small projects that had received modest funding from several government ministries and other funding agencies. Some small programs consequently had quite large budgets. If funding agencies do not coordinate their funding decisions, there is no way of knowing whether or not programs are appropriately financed.

There appear to be two major approaches to funding decisions: the evidence-based model and the community expertise model. Under the evidence-based model, funding goes to programs evaluated as effective. "Proven" programs then become the standard to be replicated in other communities. This model holds that it is better to invest significant money in a few proven programs (or organizations) than to provide small amounts to numerous unique but unproven programs in specific communities.

According to the community expertise model, only community residents can accurately identify local needs and design effective programs for the community. This model emphasizes innovation and creativity in program development and implementation. Typically, numerous unique programs are developed and implemented locally, most with only modest, time-limited funding. Under this model, government resources are thinly spread across many types of programs in many different communities.

Both models seem to influence funding practices in Ontario, with individual ministries and agencies leaning toward one or the other. It makes sense to replicate and expand proven programs, but creativity and innovation that might lead to even more effective programs should also be encouraged. We believe both models have merit in appropriate settings; what is of paramount importance is that the various ministries and agencies develop mechanisms that allow them to ensure programs are appropriately funded and that their stated objectives and outcomes support an overall violence reduction strategy. It cannot be said with any certainty that this is the case at present.

Chapter 9:

Structural Reform to Address Violence Involving Youth

Introduction

As we saw in chapters 3 and 4, circumstances such as poverty, racism, lack of family supports and the like do not directly cause violence. Instead, but importantly, they are sources of — in our parlance, the roots of — the immediate risk factors for violence involving youth, including alienation, oppression, lack of hope or empathy, low self-esteem, impulsiveness and no other apparent means of being heard nor of addressing inequalities and unfairness.

This led us to conclude that a social opportunity strategy must be put in place across all sectors in Ontario to mobilize the social capital and other assets in our communities to address these roots. We must change the circumstances that now nurture the immediate risk factors into new ones that produce hope and opportunity.

Most of this chapter focuses on that task. We do, though, go on to address the interventions that are still required at the individual level to deal with those youth who develop the immediate risk factors about which we are so concerned. We do this briefly as there are already established programs on which to draw, with the main need now being to focus on and increase the use of those interventions that the evidence shows work best. In this context, we add our voices to those calling for a handgun ban in Ontario and briefly outline our reasons for doing so.

In approaching our broader strategy, we again acknowledge that much of value has already been said and written about the roots of violence involving youth and ways to address them. Inspired, insightful work has taken place in communities, in the academic world, in previous reports and in governments. Many dedicated people in all sectors have worked with passion and commitment to provide opportunities for youth and to make our communities safer. It is with profound admiration for this work that we have nonetheless concluded, for the reasons set out in Chapter 5, that in 2008 and beyond, this province faces a real risk of matters getting worse, not better.

To reverse this situation, and to create sustainable hope and opportunity for all Ontarians, we believe that a comprehensive and aligned approach based on four "pillars" is essential. These pillars will, collectively, provide a repaired social context, a youth policy framework, a neighbourhood capacity and empowerment strategy, and a new integrated governance system for all activities bearing upon violence involving youth. We conclude this introduction by summarizing them, and then discuss each in detail in the balance of the chapter. In summary, the four pillars are:

1. **A Repaired Social Context**

   This pillar will bring together strategies to address the level, the concentrations and the circumstances of poverty, along with such tightly related issues as racism, housing, education, family and community support, transportation, the justice system and other services. It will provide a targeted and measurable long-term strategy to move from social exclusion to social inclusion, creating greater opportunities for the young people who lack them now.

2. **A Comprehensive Youth Policy Framework**

   Building on the early childhood development framework that has anchored programming for children up to age six, this pillar will provide a comprehensive framework based on developmental stages and outcome goals to guide the policy and program decisions of all orders of government, the community and agencies. It will foster strategic decision-making and policy coherence across the numerous sectors concerned about violence involving youth.

   An important part of implementing the framework is the necessity of bringing youth-led organizations into both policy and delivery roles. It is youth who must have key roles in the design and delivery of this strategy, as they will pay the heaviest long-term price if it does not succeed.

3. **A Neighbourhood Capacity and Empowerment Focus**

   This pillar will enhance or create local centres, often based in or around schools, in which opportunities and services for youth and their families can be maximized, and community cohesion fostered. They will provide space and services, but just as importantly, will also provide hubs in which communities can anchor ever-increasing amounts of local policy-making, priority-setting and program delivery. This pillar also includes supports for resident engagement, financial stability for key service providers and new funding mechanisms for core community building organizations.

4. **Integrated Governance**

   This pillar will provide new governance mechanisms to enable the provincial government to plan and deliver an effective, coordinated and efficient approach to the broad range of issues affecting violence involving youth. These mechanisms are essential if the rest of the overall strategy is to work.

   As these new provincial mechanisms are put in place, the pillar provides a community-based approach through which the Province's integrated governance mechanisms can develop strategic partnerships with the other orders of government. Those partnerships will set priorities, develop policies and deliver services, and also collectively begin to listen to and work with communities in ways that support their cohesion, capacity and meaningful involvement in governance.

These four pillars form the heart of our advice to the Premier. In our view, violence involving youth can only be addressed by ensuring sustained and relentless progress towards a social context that provides hope and opportunity for all Ontarians, a youth policy framework, enhanced neighbourhood capacity and empowerment, and an integrated governance structure. Supported by our individual intervention strategies, these four pillars will effectively address the roots of violence involving youth, while at the same time improving the quality of life for everyone in this province.

The First Pillar:
A Repaired Social Context

Introduction

In this pillar, we discuss the kinds of social context changes that we believe are necessary to address the roots of violence involving youth. We saw in Chapter 4 how pervasive, persistent and invasive those roots are, and in Chapter 5 how much damage they are doing not only to specific individuals, but also to entire neighbourhoods and potentially to the social fabric of this province.

These roots have grown over a number of years. They were not created by one party or government or segment of society. We all bear the responsibility for having let a series of discrete policy choices, including the failure to implement the recommendations of earlier reports, undermine the social strength that Ontario needs in order to be a safe, prosperous and inclusive society for all.

Just as those policy omissions and commissions grew over time, so will it take time to remedy them. There are initiatives such as anti-racism, addressing the circumstances of poverty and mental health, and starting to build community hubs that can and should be advanced immediately, while others will take varying amounts of time to initiate, with implementation times ranging from months or years to possibly a generation.

We stress this point not to encourage the government to respond in a slow way, but rather to be clear that the breadth of our analysis does not mean that we are suggesting that everything we discuss in this pillar can be done at once. If we sound cautious in this regard it is because experience shows that those opposed to change will often focus on the breadth of an initiative, and then attack the straw man of what they will say is a call for widespread change to happen all at once. For greater certainty, let us be clear that we do not claim to have all the details or choices resolved and that we are primarily providing broad directions in this social context pillar.

We believe that we have described the right destination and appropriate ways to get there, but fully recognize that work beyond our time frame or expertise will be required to turn our broad directions into detailed road maps. What we can unequivocally call for is a firm commitment to the destination, and a move away from piecemeal and sporadic ways of getting there.

As we outline in Chapter 10, Ontario needs a comprehensive plan to accomplish the required changes, with defined outcome goals, specific timelines, and clear indicators to measure progress on a regular basis and to keep the strategy on track as those goals are pursued. The government must provide hope as well as opportunity. A clear set of commitments with measurable steps and early progress will provide a basis for that hope even if everything that is desired, and indeed desirable, cannot be provided in the earliest years.

With those important understandings, we will proceed to outline the kinds of initiatives that we believe are needed to repair our social context so that it works against the roots of violence involving youth, rather than, for many among us, nurturing and encouraging them. While, for ease of exposition, we discuss the social context issues in separate categories, they are all interrelated. A cohesive and aligned strategy across all of the areas we cover will be required if progress is to be made.

For reasons made clear in chapters 4 and 5, we begin with the issues of poverty and racism, and particularly those physical spaces where they intersect. But we wish to stress that the roots of violence involving youth also arise in other places and contexts and can manifest themselves in Ontarians of all backgrounds. Alienation, lack of hope, impulsivity and other immediate risk factors are powerfully, but far from exclusively, driven by the intersection of racism and poverty.

Mental health issues, unhealthy, stressed and unsupportive families, transportation barriers, education issues and other roots we have discussed affect many youth who are not members of racialized groups and/or do not live in areas of concentrated deprivation. These issues arise throughout our society. Although often the best way to get at the most pernicious intertwinings of the roots is to work with and within the most disadvantaged communities, the measures we discuss here must also be applied more widely.

Pillar 1 accordingly sets out both targeted and universal measures to improve the social context across the province in ways that will address the roots of violence involving youth. We proceed in subsequent parts of this chapter to discuss our other three pillars: a policy framework to guide these changes as they apply to youth, a strategy to strengthen and work with communities across the province and a governance structure designed to maintain focus and build collaboration over the long haul. Then, in Chapter 10, we outline an overall accountability structure and a road map for this work.

1. Responding to Poverty

The Potential for a Virtuous Cycle

Ontario is a rich province: rich in resources, rich in people and rich in potential. As the Premier said on May 8 of this year, even a somewhat declining economy does not change the reality that Ontario is situated in a country of haves. There is, in our view, no justification for the level or conditions of poverty that coexist with this wealth.

We start with this statement because we do not want what we say about measures to reduce the impacts of poverty to in any way be seen as our acceptance of the level of poverty Ontario now has, or anything like it. Our mandate, the crossroads at which we find the province and the reality of the time it will take to address poverty, even with the Premier's impressive commitment to do so, all nonetheless compel us to put forward such measures.

As a fundamental starting point for what we propose, we wish to repeat an important message from Chapter 4. Poverty does not directly cause violence involving youth. For the reasons we set out in that chapter, if not ameliorated it can nonetheless play a central role in generating alienation, a lack of hope or opportunity, low self-esteem, a sense of having no future and other immediate risk factors for that violence.

The three main ways poverty can do so, as identified in Chapter 4, provide a logical way to also look at solutions. To recap, they are:

- The **level** of poverty: the depth of relative deprivation experienced by those in poverty

- The **concentration** of poverty in definable geographic areas where negative impacts grow and reinforce each other, and strain when they do not eliminate the capacity of families and communities to provide positive counterweights

- The **circumstances** of poverty, in which services and facilities that most of us take for granted are not locally available or are denied by reason of cost or accessibility, or both, to those who need them the most, eliminating from the lives of far too many the positive factors that can impede the growth of the roots of violence involving youth.

At we noted in Chapter 4, these factors are at present intertwining in powerfully negative ways, accelerating the malignant impacts of each and creating immediate risk factors on a widespread basis. In our view, positive action on each of them is not only necessary, but is also efficient: each discrete action will be linked in positive ways to the others, powerfully reinforcing the individual gains made by each.

These positive actions will of necessity be advanced and achieved at different rates. The first aspect, the level of poverty itself, will likely take the longest to resolve. Few see it taking less than a generation, and indeed most would applaud a firm commitment to even that relatively long time frame. By contrast, many of the negative circumstances of poverty are ripe for immediate action.

Although the other aspect of poverty, the concentrations, can as a practical matter only be addressed incrementally, progress in that direction will be very much accelerated by actions to reduce the level of poverty and to advance the initiatives we describe to address its circumstances. If poverty is less deep and devastating for families, and if poor neighbourhoods receive early infusions of recreational facilities, parks and community building centres, and if their schools and public spaces become safer and better, these improving conditions will weaken some of the roots we have discussed. These improvements will also begin to slow the exodus from these communities, attract businesses and jobs, and make the communities increasingly attractive to those who are somewhat better off, all of which will reduce the concentration of disadvantage itself. The potential for a virtuous cycle here is large and should not be missed.

Reducing the Level of Poverty

We do not propose to outline a strategy to deal with the first issue, that of the level of poverty. The way forward has been mapped by many. It calls for higher and more stable levels of income support; better job training, readiness and opportunities; improved access to employment insurance benefits; the elimination of barriers to pursuing higher education and to getting, maintaining and advancing in employment; the removal of barriers caused by racism and other forms of discrimination; and other well-known strategies.

Ontario's Poverty Reduction Committee and the Throne Speech and Budget commitments to establish goals and timelines to reduce poverty in Ontario are very positive steps in this regard. We accept and applaud the Premier's commitment to making serious progress on this front and will defer to that resolve and to the expertise that his committee is bringing to its task. We simply wish to record our view that we consider relentless progress on this issue to be not only a matter of basic human dignity, but as well an essential part of any plan to address the roots of violence involving youth.

Addressing the Concentrations of Poverty

For the myriad of reasons set out in chapters 4 and 5, we consider high concentrations of poverty to be one of the most significant sources of the immediate risk factors for violence involving youth. To cite just one of the many voices articulating this concern, Prof. Scot Wortley, after studying crime and its origins for many years, recently concluded in a paper prepared for our review that:

> Ontario, it seems, is currently at risk of developing the types of permanent underclass communities (often referred to as ghettos) that have marked the history of urban development in the United States. The warning must be sounded — if such deprived neighbourhoods become entrenched, it is very likely that much higher rates of violent crime will follow (Wortley, Volume 4: 59).

As discussed above, these concentrations of disadvantage will continue to create this risk every day until they are addressed, frustrating many of the efforts being made in numerous other ways to reduce violence involving youth. To fail to address them is to ensure a steady supply of new recruits to replace whatever number of youth our other interventions deter from violence, thus wasting public dollars and, tragically, lives. It is simply not logical to fight fires with one set of public policies while at the same time starting others by failing to correct these continuing policy failures from the past.

We agree with the mantra adopted in Britain to anchor its neighbourhood renewal strategy: no one should be seriously disadvantaged by where they live. Or, to put the matter more directly in the terms of our mandate: where someone lives should not itself generate immediate risk factors for their being involved in violence.

This is a long-term goal, but one on which action can start immediately and where an accretion of seemingly small steps can make a major difference over time. First and most obviously, we must stop the creation or expansion of concentrations of disadvantage. New affordable housing must be created through a long-term plan, with new units integrated into economically mixed neighbourhoods. As well, inclusionary zoning and other planning tools must be used to encourage economically mixed development overall.

As described by the Community University Research Alliance, inclusionary zoning is:

> … a policy tool that ties the production of affordable housing to market-rate residential development. Any residential development that includes a certain minimum number of units must include some affordable housing. In this way, inclusionary zoning makes the creation of new affordable housing independent of direct public funding. It simply becomes a cost of doing private residential development. This policy tool has been used extensively in the United States and the United Kingdom, and in a weaker form in Canada as well.
>
> There are two main benefits associated with inclusionary zoning. First, affordable housing is produced. Second, the affordable units are usually provided in the same location as market-rate developments, thereby creating communities with a good socio-economic mix (Community University Research Alliance, 2007: 8).

In this connection, we note the potential to pair inclusionary zoning with incentives for developers, and note as well that Ontario's Places to Grow (formerly Smart Growth) strategy provides an existing land-use planning mechanism, which might be adapted to support moves in this direction. Economic integration has not been part of its mandate thus far, but it seems to us that it can and should be part of this innovative approach to advancing the provincial interest in land-use planning.

In addition to inclusionary zoning, the Community University Research Alliance has also suggested a number of other mechanisms, which could be deployed to advance the goal of economically integrated neighbourhoods. These mechanisms support a number of specific objectives, including decreasing the potential to displace existing residents, maintaining the affordability of existing rental housing, adding new rental housing and maintaining a mix of local shops and services. They include:

- Increase federal funding for the federal rental housing rehabilitation programs.
- Eliminate vacancy de-control — a provision that phases out rent control when a tenant moves out of an apartment and thereby reduces the supply of affordable housing, especially in improving neighbourhoods.
- Provide incentives to maintain existing rental buildings with six or fewer units.
- Increase federal funding and make less restrictive the requirements for the federal government's secondary suite incentive program to generate more rental accommodation in private homes.
- Encourage more rooming houses by permitting them in more neighbourhoods and streamlining their regulation.
- Reduce parking requirements for affordable housing and make related regulatory reforms to encourage its creation.

We are not in a position to assess the merits of each of these proposals. We list them here simply to illustrate that there is an established body of thinking about how to work towards economically integrated neighbourhoods. What Ontario needs to do is to recognize why it is essential to do so, and then to open the door to the readily available expertise, which is more than willing to bring forward the needed actions.

A second part of any strategy to reduce concentrations of disadvantage is to improve and integrate the ones that already exist. As we have seen, bringing economic diversity to a community will provide the role models and other positive influences that are in too short supply in these neighbourhoods now. It will also bring the "sharp elbows of the middle class" to work within the community for its betterment, rather than having them working in other communities in a competitive way that hurts the disadvantaged communities.

Indeed, it is likely that more progress can be made in the short run by diversifying the existing concentrations of disadvantage than by efforts to locate affordable housing in better-off communities. The latter efforts are important, but they are not likely to bear much fruit very quickly, nor is their likely scale such that they will have significant impacts on the existing concentrations of disadvantage.

An important emphasis should therefore be on finding ways to diversify existing concentrations of disadvantage while protecting the social and individual strengths such neighbourhoods often have. Regent Park in Toronto and cities elsewhere offer examples of how an area of concentrated poverty can be integrated by adding condominiums and by changing the physical structure to better connect it to the surrounding community. While there is some dispute as to how this has been done, and whether enough care has been taken to protect existing social structures and bonds, few question the goal of economic integration itself.

Given the many ways these concentrations can foster the immediate risk factors, we see this as a core area for provincial investment. We stress, though, that the economic integration of existing concentrations of disadvantage must be done in a way that respects and, indeed, reinforces the strengths of those communities. Great care must be taken to understand those strengths and to manage the process of redevelopment to support and incorporate them throughout the entire process. Relocation of residents while work is done, for example, should be to areas as close as possible to the community, ideally keeping youth in their current schools, and should seek to keep together those who share social bonds.

To be clear, we also stress that we are not talking about gentrification. It does little good to "improve" a disadvantaged neighbourhood by having the middle class replace the disadvantaged and displace them to some other concentration of poverty. Indeed, it does harm, as the social bonds and structures that helped people cope with disadvantage will be fractured in the process.

In all of the efforts to diversify the existing concentrations of disadvantage, it is accordingly vital to remember that the goal is to reduce alienation, provide hope, build self-esteem and foster a sense of belonging to and engagement with the wider community. This is not a bricks and mortar exercise, but a fundamentally human one in which bricks and motor are the means, not the end.

Addressing the Circumstances of Poverty

This is an initiative that pays dividends in two important ways. First, it improves the quality of life for the disadvantaged wherever they live, addressing in many ways the key drivers of alienation, lack of hope and lack of any sense of belonging to or having a stake in society. Second, where the circumstances are addressed by adding important amenities and services to disadvantaged neighbourhoods, it makes them more attractive places to live and raise families. This, in turn, encourages existing residents to stay as they improve their own economic situation.

This second approach also has another benefit. It makes those neighbourhoods more attractive to those who have some degree of choice about where they live. We are not saying that the middle class will rush to move into a disadvantaged area just because it has good services. But we do believe that, as improvements begin in these neighbourhoods, they or their immediate vicinities will start to be seen as viable options for those who have more choice about where to live. This will further strengthen those communities and, indeed, increase over time the potential to proceed with redevelopment along the lines of Regent Park.

The fundamental value of redressing the circumstances of poverty should be obvious. Long ago, we decided that poverty should not bar an education and so we provided free and universal public education. More recently, we determined that it should not bar access to hospitals and later to core medical services and so we made hospitals free and built medicare. Today, there is simply no reason to accept that poverty should mean fewer and poorer parks, recreation facilities, community centres, arts opportunities, local stores or public services, nor should it mean inferior public transit service.

Indeed, it seems clear that if we cannot reduce serious income gaps and if people are condemned to live in areas of concentrated disadvantage, largely, and in the case of youth, entirely, for reasons beyond their own control, then the least we as a society can do is to try to counterbalance this with public services. Youth with the greatest need and who otherwise get the least from society should have excellent parks, first-rate recreational and arts facilities, the best-resourced schools and the easiest access to public services. Although this should be done as a matter of fundamental fairness, it will play a central role in addressing the roots of violence and thereby improving the prospects for our society as a whole.

The most urgent and pressing need is a safe and accessible place for youth to gather, play and engage in arts activities. We won't overuse the word "shocked" in this report, but we will say that we were profoundly shocked by the realization that so many youth have nowhere to go and nothing to do outside the perhaps 35 hours a week they spend in school for about nine months each year.

We have stood in some of the disadvantaged neighbourhoods and looked around and tried to imagine a day, a week, a summer or, impossibly for us, a childhood spent with no place for creative play. We have been taken into some "recreation centres" only to see that they are woefully inadequate — in some the spaces are so few and so small that it is hard to see how active recreation could occur at all. And we have been told all too often how the better spaces that do exist in some communities are booked by outside groups and are off-limits to local youth, who have no other options.

This issue extends beyond the disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Many youth living in economically integrated areas lack the money to pay the fees that are often demanded for programs and services, and so are as effectively barred from them as youth in neighbourhoods where they do not exist.

We will address in Pillar 3 the need for schools to be open and accessible to serve as hubs and to provide space for youth and youth activities. Whether access is provided by new facilities or by eliminating barriers to existing ones, we believe there is a core provincial interest in youth having, as one of the greatest people of our generation, Nelson Mandela, said, the right to play and to do so in a safe, welcoming environment where they can be exposed to positive mentors and good learning experiences. For reasons we explore more fully under Pillar 3, we believe that as a matter of urgent priority the Province must bear the responsibility to ensure that there are accessible gathering, recreation and arts facilities for disadvantaged youth wherever they live.

At the same time, we also see a provincial interest in the quality of the housing stock. There are serious quality issues in public housing, much but not all of which is in neighbourhoods of concentrated disadvantage. Providing people with a quality place to live, where hot water is available, the public spaces are not run-down and unsafe, and the elevators work, is not too much to ask in this society. We saw in Chapter 4 how failing to do so incubates immediate risk factors; we cannot afford to ignore this obvious route to addressing that risk.

The Province should be vocal in trying to increase the federal funding for this, but should also significantly increase its own investment. Recent provincial funding has been significant, but still falls far short of recognizing the serious harm done when youth spend their childhood in substandard conditions.

In this regard, we were pleased to hear that the Province and the federal government may be close to an agreement on "unlocking" the equity that has been built up in public housing units. Often lost in talk about subsidized housing is the reality that public housing tenants pay rent, and that rent eventually pays off the mortgages used to finance their buildings. We were told that substantial equity now exists in the public housing stock — enough to cover not only upgrading, but new construction as well. We strongly encourage the two governments to maximize refinancing opportunities using the equity in the social housing stock for capital repairs and new development.

In addition to public investments in public housing, steps must be taken to improve the living conditions in private rental accommodation. We did not receive much information on the best ways to do this, but can say that the provincial interest in addressing the roots of violence involving youth may well require increased public interventions in the form of low-cost loans or other ways to ensure the necessary investments are made. Federal programs for this remain in place, but they fall short of the mark. The Province should seriously consider cooperating with municipal governments to close the gap as part of its strategy to address the roots of violence involving youth. We cannot wait to resolve theoretical turf wars among governments while the quality of the actual turf on which people live is generating violence.

As well, investments must be made in the physical environment in areas of concentrated disadvantage. Some of the required improvements can be seen as traditional crime control initiatives, often referred to as "creating defensible space." These generally involve improving sightlines, eliminating cul-de-sacs and dead ends, ensuring that the regular street grid passes through the neighbourhood, improving lighting and so on.

Other improvements have esthetic dimensions. The way a neighbourhood looks affects how children and adults alike see themselves, for better or for worse. Simply improving the way a space looks can change the attitudes of residents to it, to themselves and to their futures. As one youth said to us, it would be simply amazing to be able to get up in the morning, throw open a window, look out and say, "Damn, that looks fine!"

Related to this are investments to make the public space usable, and used, space. Good and well-maintained playground equipment, community gardens, possibly weekend markets and other initiatives can bring residents back to public spaces, improve the level of social interaction and cohesion and make the space unattractive to criminals. As others have noted, "inclusionary regulation" to provide for culturally specific entrepreneurial activities in these neighbourhoods may be a very promising way to help accomplish these objectives.

At the same time, governments must look at increasing access to the services they provide, like health care, counselling and job-training programs. There have been some encouraging developments in Toronto's priority neighbourhoods, but as we will discuss in more detail in Pillar 3, all orders of government must do more to locate their services and facilities in shared hubs and creatively promote access to them within priority neighbourhoods right across the province.

Similarly, government must take on the task of attracting businesses to these areas. We saw in Chapter 4 the perverse circumstance of the poorest among us facing the highest costs for the necessities of life. Apart from the economic aspect, there are serious issues here in terms of travel time, good nutrition and a sense of belonging, as well as access to and the example of productive work in the neighbourhood. Given a goal of addressing the roots of violence involving youth, there is a public purpose to be served by helping businesses to locate in these areas, whether through zoning and regulatory changes or through direct economic supports.

Conclusion

The level of poverty in Ontario, its concentrations and the lack of quality services and facilities that accompany it have a devastating impact on many individuals and families, and on their capacity to build a strong community. We apparently cannot end poverty now, but we can provide a series of initiatives and community resources that will ameliorate its effects by removing some of the major negative impacts of poverty while also strengthening the capacity of individuals, families and communities to cope with and get out of it.

2. Responding to Racism

As we said in Chapter 4, the Supreme Court of Canada has put beyond question the pervasiveness of racism in this country, stating in *R. v. Spence (2005)*:

> The courts have acknowledged that racial prejudice against visible minorities is…notorious and indisputable…[it is] a social fact not capable of reasonable dispute.

In doing so, the Court built on a series of cases from Canada's appellate courts. In a leading judgment from 1993, Mr. Justice Doherty, writing for Ontario's Court of Appeal, held that "wide-spread anti-black racism is a grim reality in Canada and in particular in Metropolitan Toronto" (*R. v. Parks*, 15 O.R. (3d) 324; [1993] O.J. No.2157, para. 42). He also wrote as follows regarding how this racism manifests itself:

> That racism is manifested in three ways. There are those who expressly espouse racist views as part of a personal credo. There are others who subconsciously hold negative attitudes towards black persons based on stereotypical assumptions concerning persons of colour. Finally, and perhaps most pervasively, racism exists within the interstices of our institutions. This systemic racism is a product of individual attitudes and beliefs concerning blacks and it fosters and legitimizes those assumptions and stereotypes (para. 43).

The impacts of this widespread racism, as set out in chapters 4 and 5, show why we believe that anti-racism must be at the heart of the government's response to the roots of violence involving youth. The devastation racism wreaks, the many ways it is deeply ingrained throughout our society, the sustained commitments required to address it and the deep reluctance of many to name it and deal with it give it, regrettably, pride of place in our analysis. For all of the reasons set out earlier in this report, it is obvious to us that a sustained strategy and immediate initiatives are urgently required to address this enduring wrong.

We think, first of all, that the provincial government should articulate more effectively its commitment to confront racism. The absence of such an articulation in recent times can lead to those not directly impacted by racism continuing to be able to leave it in the shadows and fail to take action to rectify it. It can also leave the victims of racism wondering whether their government stands with them as much as it needs to to get at the depth and breadth of a continuing and, many told us a worsening, problem. Indeed, survey research conducted in Toronto found that in 2007 perceptions of racism in policing and the courts were just as strong — indeed were slightly stronger — than they were in 1994 (Wortley, 2008).

We believe that words matter and that the government's words on this specific issue matter a great deal. And these words must be backed up by action, not because an assurance is needed that they are real, but because action is desperately needed.

The most important action the government can take is to place anti-racism at the core of its agenda. Diversity is not enough. As it was for Stephen Lewis, so it remains that the issue we confront is racism. His Toronto-focused inquiry led him to put a powerful focus on anti-Black racism, a focus that regrettably remains apposite today. But we would add that Aboriginal people are often subject to the same degree of virulent and entrenched racism. They, too, require a particular focus in an anti-racism agenda, which must encompass numerous groups. In Pillar 4 we set out a governance structure to deliver the overall strategy we propose. For now, we simply note that anti-racism needs to be a key and explicit part of that governance structure in order to drive progress and send a strong message of commitment to communities and officials alike.

In addition, we believe that Ontario needs to follow Britain's lead by ensuring that there is a public duty on all public institutions to address racism in a measurable and accountable way. As a starting point, each Ontario ministry and agency with the potential to in any way address racism should be required to produce and publish a plan to do so. These plans must identify clear objectives and timelines and provide a clear, public articulation of how the objectives will be met. This issue has been unaddressed for so long that the publication of detailed plans is essential to generate momentum and to create confidence that meaningful, sustainable change will occur.

To support this, and indeed to anchor anti-racism overall, Ontario needs to take one further overarching initiative: to mandate the collection and publication of race-based data in several key areas, including the justice and education systems. We recognize that efforts to study how this might be done have started very recently in the education system and we welcome that development. We also understand that, among other diversity data, racial statistics will be collected on the composition of the workforce at the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services as part of a two-ministry pilot project. This information was collected across the public service in the mid-'80s as part of an I-Count initiative of the then Cabinet Committee on Race Relations. While it is discouraging that we are back to pilot projects, we nonetheless welcome these steps in the right direction.

The need for race-based data is overwhelming, and the reassurance from how normalized this has become in Britain is telling. The need should be obvious: without data we can neither prove nor disprove the extent of racism in any particular part of our society. Nor can we focus limited resources on the areas most in need of action, nor design measures to achieve the most-needed results in the most efficient way, nor assess whether progress is being made as a result of those measures.

Indeed, it is hard to think of another domain where it would be controversial to seek evidence of a problem and, where a problem is found, go on to seek evidence of how best to address it and whether the efforts made to do so are bearing fruit.

We know that in the late 1980s, the Black community in Toronto resisted the collection of race-based statistics by the police because of fears about how the information would be used. While the Black community is far from homogenous, and while there will likely be some dissenting voices, we were advised that there is not only broad acceptance of the need for this information in that community but, as well, a strong sense that progress will not be made without it. Recent research published by the *Toronto Star* supports this attitude. It found that, while racialized groups are disproportionately convicted of crimes, the public believes that their involvement is almost double what it actually is. In the result, publishing race-based data can help calm, rather than incite, prejudicial public opinion (Rankin and Powell, *Toronto Star*, July 21, 2008: A1).

We note in this specific connection that the collection of race-based data on policing in Britain goes back to at least 1992. In calling for Ontario to adopt this approach, including in what seems to be the most fraught area here: front-line policing, the British precedent is as reassuring as it is inspiring. After more than a decade of experience, we were advised by a senior police commander in London that, while some front-line officers consider it bureaucratic, it has widespread endorsement, especially among police leadership. It provides a vital tool to find areas needing improvement, develop approaches to secure that improvement and demonstrate the improvement to the public.

While policing was the focus of attention in Ontario in the 1980s, we by no means suggest that in the justice sector information is needed only in relation to the police. As was demonstrated by the Commission on Systemic Racism in the Ontario Criminal Justice System in the 1990s, there is much of value that this information can teach us about each stage in the justice system: policing, prosecution, judging and corrections. In the specific context of the criminal justice system, a very significant report from Britain entitled *Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society* makes the following important observations:

> To understand the phenomenon of disproportionality in the CJS [criminal justice system], it is essential that there is an effective process for collecting and monitoring ethnicity data at each stage of the criminal justice process….[The goal is] to enable CJS practitioners and policy-makers to: identify disproportionality in the CJS; understand the causes of disproportionality; performance manage the CJS in relation to race issues; and demonstrate accountability to Black and minority ethnic communities (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2007: 65).

We by no means believe that data are needed only in relation to the administration of justice. As is the case in Britain, they are needed and valuable in several other public domains, including housing, health, the labour market and all levels of the education system. In the report noted immediately above, the Department for Communities and Local Government in Britain demonstrates convincingly the value of detailed race-based statistics in all of these areas.

We believe that the same information base is required in Ontario and agree with the senior Ontario official who wrote to us in the following terms:

> Collection of race-based data in a multicultural society is considered to be a sensitive issue as cultural communities may have concerns that the information gathered could be misused to discriminate against minority groups. Race-based data, however, can be used ethically and effectively to determine the special needs of minorities, identify systemic shortcomings that are affecting a particular group, remove systemic barriers and promote substantive equality, or to develop programs designed specifically to meet the needs of a particular group.

Beyond our core advice on creating a public duty to address racism and on gathering the information to do so, we believe that the specifics of the anti-racism plans to be produced by ministries and agencies should largely be left to them. But we make an exception for two areas where action is urgently needed and where we believe we have heard enough to make specific proposals. The two areas are front-line policing and the education system.

These areas are at the core of the problems we have heard about: front-line policing because it is difficult and challenging to do well, and because when it is not, it can undo all of the good work being accomplished elsewhere to create optimism and hope; and education because it is where much of that good work must be done. No doubt for these reasons, these areas have been the subject of clear recommendations in many reports going back many years.

The most immediately pressing issues are those involving front-line policing. These have serious community-wide implications, as well as the potential to be flashpoints on a daily basis. In our view, action on them will have the greatest short-term impact on matters giving rise to violence involving youth.

We recognize that a long-term cultural shift, a more representative police force and a re-thinking of some front-line police strategies will be necessary to fully come to grips with this issue. As the ongoing workplace issues in relation to racism among employees at Ontario's correctional facilities demonstrate, this will take sustained time and energy. In the meantime, we feel that tangible signals of a commitment to address these long-standing concerns need to be sent now to both police and residents in the priority neighbourhoods across the province.

We first suggest that the Province establish a fund, which communities and police could access to support highly localized police-youth issues committees in each priority neighbourhood across the province. Funds would support youth participation and provide for a neutral facilitator. The police would be represented by the local police commander and front-line officers engaged in policing in the area (not just liaison officers). These committees would open the kind of dialogue which wouldn't otherwise happen, and would be mandated to develop a neighbourhood-specific plan to improve interactions between youth and front-line officers. They would also be involved in the design and delivery of the local training programs we propose below.

We agree with what the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services said to us, when it called for "more opportunities for positive interaction between police and youth." We think that these committees can and will be positive. The opportunity to hear each other out, coupled with the obligation to work together to build a local plan on matters of direct and immediate relevance to their work and lives, should make these committees places of constructive engagement.

The second immediate initiative we propose would also be very local and would be centred in the priority neighbourhoods. It would see the Province provide funding for immediate, in-service, neighbourhood-based training on anti-racism for front-line officers in each of these neighbourhoods. We recommend this tight focus for reasons of expedition and cost, and also because we believe that service-related training is likely to be the most effective. We agree with what Stephen Lewis said in his 1992 report, specifically in the context of race-relations training:

> If we really believe in investing in our justice system, then the people who are on the front-line deserve the best training possible (Lewis, 1992: 13).

We have been told repeatedly that the few hours of sensitivity training at the Police College before recruits begin their work as police officers does very little good. The training is of necessity generic and is divorced from experience in the field. We were often told that the training is very frequently overridden by police leaders and colleagues once recruits take up their duties.

What most of us know about adult education is that it is most effective when taught in a hands-on way and when it responds to issues we are actually facing in our work or our lives. We heard in England how they are now focusing race-relations training for the police on very specific job functions and using the orientation of improving the officer's functioning in their current assignment. The training, therefore, is not about sensitivity in some general way, but rather focuses on ways in which a better appreciation of anti-racism will improve the officer's performance in the particular job they are carrying out.

Our rationale for suggesting that the initial focus for this kind of job-specific training be on front-line officers is simple: it is interactions with front-line officers that can do the most damage to race relations and where addressing concerns about racism could do the most good. We understand that those are often difficult and sometimes dangerous situations for the officers themselves, and that many of the youth they deal with seem or can be aggressive and intimidating. Even though most youth stopped by the police do not meet this description, the reality that some do increases, rather than obviates, the need for this training.

As these short-term training measures are put in place, we believe that the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services should carefully examine the recent British approach of requiring officers to be "assessed as competent" on issues of race. As described in the *Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society* report to which we referred earlier, "[a] key goal of this program is to ensure that, by 2009, everyone in the Police Service is assessed as being competent about race and diversity…." (Department for Communities and Local Government, 2007). In the same vein, consideration could be given to including good community relations and support in measuring the performance of local police commanders.

This initiative applies nationwide and is overseen by a national board. Police forces are required to have a suitable number of trained assessors, and assessment has started in most police forces. What is attractive about this is that it goes beyond training to find out whether training has worked and, if not, to identify specifically where and what more is needed.

The last specific initiative we propose for the police is the establishment of a telephone hotline for the reporting of negative interactions between police and minority youth. Those interactions can take place anywhere in this province, and without recourse to a system such as this there will be neither the information nor the impetus to develop a sound way to deal with them, wherever they arise. This service could be established as part of the new independent police complaints oversight body, which is expected to be operational shortly after our report is published, or in some other independent body. In either event, it would provide a sound anchor, directly or indirectly, for the power in the new oversight system to undertake reviews of systemic issues arising in policing anywhere in Ontario.

We have resisted the temptation to add any more specific proposals in relation to policing at this time. Lest it be lost, however, we do want to suggest that, in preparing their anti-racism plans, Ontario's three justice ministries consider carefully the recommendations in the important work of the Commission on Systemic Racism in the Ontario Criminal Justice System and, where appropriate, undertake research to update its key findings.

In the education system, we feel that the most urgent priority is to bring more teachers who reflect and represent the diversity of the students into schools in priority neighbourhoods. This cannot be left to chance or to the vagaries of the hiring practices of individual schools. Through whatever mechanisms the Ministry of Education has or can develop quickly, we believe that action on this issue must be advanced immediately.

Recognizing that, even given the highest priority, the results of this will be incremental, we encourage the ministry to support a program of culturally specific youth workers in schools in priority neighbourhoods. These workers should be trained to "bridge" the experience of students and families with the circumstances at the school. They should help schools, students and families understand each other and should work to keep youth engaged in their schooling even as the issues we identified in Chapter 4 persist.

Lastly, we encourage the Province to consider the ways in which the education system could be enriched through the initiatives that would flow from a body like the Black Cultural Institute outlined in the paper in Volume 4 by Prof. Walcott and his colleagues.

We can think of no better way to close this section of our report than by again citing Stephen Lewis:

> If we are ever to rid this world of so much of the poverty and despair to which vulnerable communities are subject, then we must simply develop bold — even daring — economic and social policies. A new race relations construct might be just the place to start. (Lewis, 1992: 35–36).

3. Other Social Context Initiatives

We started our social context analysis by outlining responses to the roots that arise from poverty, including its intersections with racism and place, because these are the roots that many are reluctant to confront and that are indeed the most challenging. As we move beyond issues of poverty and racism, and the physical places where they intersect, we stress that the roots of violence involving youth can arise throughout our society. It is not only disadvantaged and racialized individuals who need our attention; the roots we are concerned about arise in and affect many others as well.

Although often the best way to address the roots of the immediate risk factors for violence involving youth is to work within the disadvantaged communities, most of the measures we discuss in this section must also be applied more widely. Before outlining these measures, we want to stress that wherever needed services are provided to youth, each youth's context must be taken into consideration. It does little long-term good to provide after-school programming to a child who cannot benefit from it because of an unaddressed mental health issue, or because their home is a place of constant crisis. There is limited value in dealing with the issues one family member faces if the unaddressed problems of another family member will undo that work in an instant.

People do not live as service units. They live in families, in peer groups and sometimes in group homes or on the streets and are deeply affected by the health and well-being of those around them. A recent publication from the Social Exclusion Task Force in Britain, entitled *Think Family*, put the matter in the following terms:

> Even the best children's services can only ever mitigate the impacts of parental problems such as domestic violence, learning disability or substance misuse.

> The next phase of our efforts to improve outcomes for children must therefore include adults' services and recognise the importance of addressing the problems that parents face....
>
> Both adults' and children's services [should] take into account the family circumstances and responsibilities.... Services working with different family members [should be] aligned, giving a consistent message and working towards the same outcomes. Practitioners [should] consider the ways in which different family members and their problems interrelate... (Social Exclusion Task Force, 2008: 6–7).

We see much wisdom in this and would apply the same analysis beyond families to consider youth in the context of their peers, schools and communities. As well, the same integrated viewpoint must apply to the services themselves. In discussing the issues below under separate headings, we do not in any way want to be taken as suggesting that they be addressed in these compartments.

Mental Health

We saw in Chapter 4 how pervasive the impacts of unaddressed youth mental health issues are in this province. These issues affect the capacity of families to function and thrive and the ability of children and youth to progress in school and interact positively with their peers. For these and other reasons, they are a powerful predictor of involvement in the child welfare and criminal justice systems. Indeed, concerns about the extent of these issues and the lack of resources to address them were among the most frequent we heard.

We heard from school boards about the needs of children starting at age five, or even earlier. They and mental health practitioners stressed that it is vital to address learning disabilities before a child is labelled, and feels, dumb and begins what could be a long-term disengagement from learning. And, for youth as well as children encountering mental health issues, we heard widespread concern about both the lack of a strategy and the lack of services to address their needs.

And yet, the response to this pervasive problem is not unduly complex, nor in the context of provincial spending for health is it unduly expensive. The solution, it seems to us, has several key components.

First, we need to work on prevention through programs that promote health, engagement and activity for youth. Second, as Senator Michael Kirby has so eloquently demonstrated, it is essential that we bring mental illness out from the shadows. There is no more reason to be ashamed of, or to try to hide, a mental illness than there would be a physical ailment. And yet, in much of the broader community and, we were told, even more so in some minority group communities, it is simply not done to talk about mental health concerns.

Part of the answer to this is appropriate public campaigns to educate families, schools and communities about the true nature of mental illness. Another part is to equip those dealing with children and youth, whether they are teachers, mentors, coaches, police officers, youth workers or others, to recognize the signs of mental illness so that they can recommend interventions.

But most importantly, those interventions must be available and accessible. We were told by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health that there are severe gaps in the availability of mental health services. This is true throughout the province, but is even more the case in smaller centres and more remote areas. The estimate we were given of the cost of having a good spectrum of services universally available for youth was about $200 million.

While in isolation this sum may seem large, one need only compare it to the annual cost of just the custodial part of the youth justice system — over $160 million — to put it into perspective. When it is compared to the cost of the rest of the health system, the perspective is even clearer: making this investment would increase our health care costs by only half a per cent.

The savings that would flow to the education system, the justice system, and the well-being and productivity of youth and their families alone make this a very compelling investment. But when the value of the saved lives and reduced violence are considered, it is impossible not to see this as near the top of the list of urgently needed initiatives.

It is important that this investment be sustained over the long haul and made in a way that maximizes access by those who need these services the most. This means having mental health services available within schools and communities, in locations and at hours, and linked to other services, so that families can and will easily use them. This work to take the services to the clients needs to be supported by skilled and sensitive outreach, effective "navigators" to help youth and their families sort out options and align services and creative, culturally conscious mechanisms to break down parents' reluctance to have their children use them. In part for this reason, and also to promote a "think family" approach, local mental health clinics should, wherever possible, be integrated with other services for family members and ideally should be offered within the supportive and welcoming community hubs we propose in Pillar 3, which will not only facilitate, but also encourage access.

Education

We can be brief here because many of the issues that concern us the most have been the subject of detailed and wise recommendations for many years. We believe education to be at the heart of everything that needs to be done to help youth succeed in our society. To us, it is simply and fundamentally wrong not to take every realistically possible measure to ensure that its enormous benefits are not denied to any youth.

We recognize that numerous creative steps have been taken in that direction over the years and that much of value is in place. In pointing out the continuing shortcomings, we do not seek to diminish the value of what is being done. But they are such important shortcomings, and of such long standing, that we must express our frustration that they remain largely unaddressed.

We consider it unacceptable that the issue of a culturally and racially inclusive curriculum remains on a to-do list over 30 years since its absence was first flagged as a serious barrier to learning. We are not talking here about special weeks or recognizing cultural holidays or offering add-on programs. We are talking about having a curriculum that addresses the very real gaps and consequences outlined in Chapter 4, and thereby promotes a positive learning environment for all students.

In this regard, coming as they do more than 30 years after the calls for a racially inclusive curriculum began, the comments in the report of the Grassroots Youth Collaborative are worthy of note:

> Thus, it is not so much a matter of building more 'inclusion' into the education system (i.e., trying to add more cultures to a primarily white, Eurocentric male-dominated curriculum), but rather, what is required is the 're-centering' of curriculum within a model that values the histories and struggles of indigenous people, racialized communities, women, queer communities, disabled communities and other poor and/or marginalized communities (Grassroots Youth Collaborative, Volume 3: 119).

We believe that this issue must be addressed now and that youth organizations, such as Schools Without Borders, part of the Grassroots Youth Collaborative, should be closely involved in developing the appropriate curriculum changes.

Also in relation to the curriculum, we wish to note that, while there is much that is positive in the increased academic focus that the government has brought to our schools, that focus has not been accompanied by the supports and incentives that some youth need to cope with higher academic expectations. Just the contrary: several groups pointed out to us that, while the curriculum has become tougher, the programs that provide the supports and incentives that some youth need to stay engaged in school have not been restored after being cut in earlier years.

Some youth will stay in school because they connect with the right counsellor or outreach worker. Others do so because of literacy programs and homework clubs operated by bodies like Frontier College, which has a strong record in this field nationally and is active in Aboriginal communities and Toronto's priority neighbourhoods. For yet others, the attraction of sports or involvement with the arts will keep them working to master the curriculum: this is not about streaming youth away from academics, but rather about finding ways to engage all students in learning.

When these kinds of programs and initiatives are seen as frills to be cut rather than integral to the learning success of many students, many students lose out. Whether from the perspective of our mandate or more broadly, we do not consider this acceptable and believe that, in at least the priority neighbourhoods across the province, the appropriate incentives and supports must be restored as integral parts of the learning structure.

In those neighbourhoods, attention also needs to be paid to more intensive measures to help high school students graduate and go on to further learning. While as a general rule we are not endorsing specific programs, we want to support and encourage the interest the Ministry of Education has shown in the Pathways to Education program, which has recently been expanded from Toronto's Regent Park to Kitchener and Ottawa, as well as four additional Toronto neighbourhoods.

What attracts us to Pathways is not just the success it appears to be having, but the integrated approach it takes to keeping youth in school and helping them aim for and attain higher education. The program combines academic help (tutoring four nights a week), social (group mentoring), financial (from bus tickets to a modest bursary for higher education) and community (student-parent support workers to help connect youth, parents, schools and community agencies). It is by combining these elements, focusing on trying to reach all the youth in the catchment neighbourhood and rooting itself in its community that Pathways offers a model initiative.

Initiatives like Pathways and more modest local ones such as Licensed to Learn (a peer-tutoring program) will nonetheless face unnecessary challenges as long as the teaching force remains so unrepresentative, again more than 30 years after the issue was forcefully raised. The explanations for this go around in a confounding circle. In one decade, we are told that there are not enough teachers from racialized groups to meet the demand. In another, we are told that there are more than enough, but that they can't get job offers. And throughout this period, no concerted strategy has been put in place to ensure that these vital positions are reflective of the student body being taught.

As noted in our discussion of racism above, we believe that this is the education issue that requires the most immediate response. Each year, a new cohort of youth enter elementary, middle or high schools only to look around and see that they are not represented in the most powerful role models in their schools: the teachers. We lose some of those youth every year as a result and have been doing so for more than three decades. We accordingly believe that the Ministry of Education must use the powers it has, or create the ones it needs, to ensure that hiring and promotion criteria include community needs. This should start in the priority communities no later than the 2009-10 school year.

A similar issue arises in relation to guidance counsellors, although, based on what we were told, the issue may run deeper than just adding more minority group counsellors. Schools need to assure themselves and their students that subconscious attitudes and stereotypes play no role in the kinds of options and encouragement offered to students. The "assessed as competent" approach to issues of racial diversity, which we discussed in relation to the police, is attractive here as well. As for the safe schools provisions, we feel that more needs to be done. The recent amendments are welcome, although it is too early to say how they are working. But we believe that countenancing a five-day suspension with no alternative learning program remains wrong. Five days is a very long time in the life of a child; certainly for a possibly angry and upset child with no parents at home and nowhere to go, it is long enough to permit far too much involvement with negative peers and risky behaviours.

We conclude this section with a reminder of the importance of schools situating their work within the local context provided by families and neighbourhoods. Students do not learn in isolation from their environment, and many cannot be reached effectively or at all if that environment is not understood by teachers and administrators. The suggestions we made in Section 2 of this Pillar about youth outreach workers should be recalled in this connection.

Little of this is new. In 1993, the Ministry of Education and Training issued Policy Program Memorandum 119. Although seemingly overlooked since then, this document remains in force. The guidelines accompanying the memorandum set out for school boards the steps in developing policy and implementation plans on anti-racism and ethnocultural equity. These steps articulated key principles of continuing relevance with which we agree, including:

- Establish community partnerships.
- Raise awareness of and identify issues of racism and ethnocultural equity that needed to be addressed.
- Define outcomes.
- Establish timelines to ensure that the outcomes and objectives are achieved (Ministry of Education and Training, 1993).

The policies were to address 10 major areas of focus: board policies, guidelines and practices; leadership; school-community partnership; curriculum; student languages; student evaluation, assessment and placement; guidance and counselling; racial and ethnocultural harassment; employment practices; and staff development. For each area of focus, boards were required, for example, to provide a list of resources that identified tools (human and material) needed to achieve the stated objectives, and an indication of the person or persons responsible for carrying out the plan of action to ensure consistent direction during implementation, facilitate monitoring and ensure accountability.

Fifteen years before Memorandum 119 was issued, Walter Pitman described to the Empire Club the findings of his race-relations report in these words:

> Obviously, what was needed was a major effort to provide teacher training, to provide curriculum change, to provide a completely different atmosphere in which young people may learn, recognizing as well the need to reach out to the family and neighbourhood in carrying out this purpose (Pitman, 1978: 6).

These remain wise recommendations. Their continuing relevance and, indeed, urgency are a telling commentary on how priorities have been set over the last 30 years.

Families

Families, in all of the forms that they take in Ontario, are at the core of everything we are proposing. Involving families in services for children, reaching out to families to make sure that they are connected to and involved with schools and placing families at the heart of communities and of community building are all vital initiatives.

But many families require supports to fulfil the role they need to play with their children and in the broader society. To be most effective, these supports must be locally available, culturally relevant and both active and creative in their outreach to the most marginalized.

For many parents, supports are needed even before a child is born. One of the most rigorously evaluated and successful initiatives in reducing violence is a program known as the "visiting nurse program." It involves having a nurse visit an expectant mother before the child is born and then regularly for the first two years of the child's life. We understand that Ontario's Healthy Babies, Healthy Children program (HBHC) provides services to mothers both before and after her child is born, but, at present, the prenatal screening component of the HBHC is not widely used. The HBHC blended home visiting is available to all identified expectant high-risk mothers, but since the identification rate is low, the uptake by that population is low. The evidence strongly supports making the prenatal program universally available and taking active and creative measures to make it known, so that it can assist all who can benefit from it.

In the same vein, the early childhood development work of Drs. Fraser Mustard and Stuart Shanker, and the Honourable Margaret Norrie McCain has convincingly demonstrated the value of investing in the learning capacity of children in their earliest years. We need not say much about this, not because it is anything but insightful and vital, but because this approach is now widely accepted in many jurisdictions. We do, though, want to make it clear that we fully endorse the approach and believe that it is an essential part of any agenda to address the roots of violence involving youth. We also fully endorse the need for both parental and non-parental supports (as in the early learning centres) to foster healthy child development.

Ontario has recognized the importance of early learning and care in order to ensure that parents have the supports necessary to advance the social, emotional and cognitive development of the youngest of our children. The Best Start program is intended to enable more and better child care in and around our schools, along with better coordinated child and community services. But more needs to be done given the extent of the need and the service gaps in Ontario. As noted by the responsible ministry, these gaps include cultural barriers to accessing services, geographic barriers based on the unavailability of service providers and an overall shortage of funding and capacity.

In this regard, the Premier's vision for all-day learning for four- and five-year-olds and Charles Pascal's work on its implementation hold great promise for developing a more seamless early-learning and supports program. Given the relationship between undiagnosed literacy problems and behavioural problems later in life, including incarceration in many cases, effective learning programs can play an enormous identification and prevention role.

This is a bold initiative, which has a significant potential to address the roots of violence involving youth. It will be most effective in this regard if it provides diverse role models, including more male involvement in early learning, fosters full-day learning and development, works actively to ensure that learning problems are noted, diagnosed and addressed at this early stage and is designed to reach the neediest children.

For example, we were struck by what we learned in Britain about the location of its Sure Start programs in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. While this was seen as a positive initiative, experience demonstrated that it was not enough to attract the very most disadvantaged. These are families that are simply too intimidated to come into any kind of formal program, however close it may be to where they live.

For these families, which tend to contain the children who most need these programs, creativity is required. When even outreach workers failed to bring these families to Sure Start centres, Britain adopted an approach from Finland, which puts staffed adventure playgrounds in the yards in front of these kinds of centres. This has been shown to act as a magnet for children, who then gradually draw their parents to the area. This allows staff to introduce the centre to the parents and to overcome the barriers to accepting these important services. We believe that Ontario needs to be similarly creative in order to reach the most marginalized families.

Similarly, as noted above, it is also important to learn from Britain's Think Family initiative. That initiative shows that what are needed are not only programs that wrap themselves around individual family members, important as that approach is, but also programs that address the needs of each family member within the context of the environment in which they spend the vast majority of their time: their family.

To this, we would add that it is also important to "think community." Families exist in communities and they, and services provided to them, are powerfully affected by that community, for better or for worse. And, for some youth, their peer or street community is their only real family. As a result, if schools and service providers do not deeply understand the community context for each youth, they are not going to be able to effectively provide the services a youth needs.

We discuss in Pillar 3 the key role that schools can play as community hubs, bringing together children, families, agencies and community organizations. Related to this is the enormous potential schools have to engage youth in positive ways during the after-school hours of 3 p.m. to 6 p.m., hours which many told us, and research confirms, were "prime time for crime."

We believe that providing well-structured recreation activities during these hours, along with healthy snacks, could play an important role in countering childhood obesity. This time period could also be used to provide mentoring opportunities, homework and other clubs, arts programs, information on nutrition and other healthy lifestyle choices, and could help keep youth safe until their parents get home from work.

In all such initiatives, particular attention needs to be paid to the needs of immigrant youth and their families, for the reasons we discussed in Chapter 4. Settlement services need to be expanded and integrated into the community hubs we propose in Pillar 3, with a focus on connecting families to schools and helping ensure immigrant youth are strongly supported to succeed there.

We turn next to the issue of respect for different family structures. This issue is laden with cultural and racial baggage. We adopt the view we heard elsewhere that what most affects the well-being of youth is not necessarily the traditional family structure, but family relationships. What matters is a healthy and positive home environment, however that home is structured.

While a two-parent home is often the ideal, a parent who is abusive, or a substance abuser, or is a dead weight in an otherwise strong household, is not a positive influence. While we must encourage parents to be positively engaged with their children and work to eliminate the social and other conditions that cause people not to want to parent their children, or lead them to have children they do not intend to raise, we must not assume that children cannot be raised to very positive effect by one parent, or by the extended-family tradition, which exists in many cultures.

Similarly, while most children do best when born to mothers who are in stable relationships and have had some life experience, some young single mothers are remarkably good in that role. Statistically, we know that teen parenthood is associated with difficulties both for the parents and the child. We must, though, be careful to look at the individual and cultural circumstances before we leap to conclusions, which can unfairly characterize and stigmatize parents who, sometimes with the help of extended families, are doing a fine job of raising their children.

Of course, Ontario needs to provide meaningful education on parenting responsibilities, sexual health and family planning. But, just as importantly, Ontario needs to ensure that two fundamental policies are in place. First, Ontario needs the kind of measures outlined throughout this pillar to provide a social context of true hope and opportunity for all youth and families. There is a widespread understanding around the world that this is the key to appropriately delayed pregnancies, strong, well-educated mothers and fathers who want to raise their children.

Second, we must wrap supports around those parents, single or otherwise, male or female, who need help to raise a child. Disapproval of a young mother or an absent father should in no way block or limit the efforts needed to secure a positive future not only for the child, but also for the parent. If we attempt to write off these members of our community because we think it will deter others, we are not only wrong, we are condemning ourselves and future generations to pay large and ongoing social costs. It is support, hope and meaningful and equitable opportunity that will address these issues over time, not disapproval.

Finally, Ontario needs to bring more focus to its approach to youth in care and youth leaving care. As discussed in Chapter 4, these are among the most vulnerable youth in this province, often harmed by their own family and then raised in environments of frequent change and uncertain nurturing.

Among the statistics that the Ministry of Children and Youth Services provided to us about youth who have been in care, we note that they are:

- Three times more likely to drop out of high school without graduating
- Three times more likely to be unemployed
- Five times more likely to be pregnant at an early age. Approximately 60 per cent of these young people become re-involved in the child welfare system as a parent
- Six times more likely to receive social assistance
- 30 times more likely to be involved in the justice system
- At high risk for homelessness. Approximately 45-90 per cent of former youth in care have experienced homelessness.

While these are national figures, they clearly illustrate the need for a program of active, transitional supports for these youth.

Of particular concern to us are the older youth in care, who often go back and forth between care and the youth justice system. We will discuss these "crossover" youth in the justice section of this pillar.

Overall, we believe that the Province needs to revisit the logic of allowing children to leave care at age 16 with no family to go to, but also requiring them to stay in school to age 18. All we know about education suggests that a stable and supportive environment is vital to learning effectively. We support the longer time in school, but question whether corresponding supports do not need to be as mandatory as the time in the classroom.

When youth do leave care, at whatever age, transition services are essential. These youth have often had very difficult childhoods, and many have been under the control of the state for much of their lives. To expect them to go from that regulated life to full independence overnight is simply not realistic.

In this regard, it was encouraging to learn that at least some youth leaving care at age 18 may be able to get an allowance to help with living costs, and may be able to access some other supports, but troubling to learn that fewer supports are in place for those who leave care earlier. We applaud Ontario's June 2008 announcement that, over time, youth from 15-17 will have a lump sum of up to $3,300 to assist them in leaving care, but question whether it is enough to make a real difference to a troubled youth.

Housing, Transportation and Community Design

We discussed above the need to increase the supply of affordable housing and for improvements to housing standards and quality in both the public and private sectors. The need to ensure an acceptable standard of housing for those who frequently have no real choice about where they live must be recognized across the province.

In the same way, it is important to address the isolating features of the way some communities are designed, as we discussed in Chapter 4. The community hubs we propose under Pillar 3 will go some distance in this regard. But it is important as well to integrate people not only within their own communities, but across the broader community.

One important way to do this is by rethinking public transit. Transit planners should take into account the impacts of isolation on youth and the impacts of long and difficult commutes on parents struggling to find time to spend with their children. There is an important social good in planning transportation specifically to strengthen families and communities. And there is an important public good in making that transit affordable for the youth who need it to break the bonds of isolation and access the learning, socialization or work opportunities of the wider community.

In the same vein, those design features of some communities that facilitate crime, making both living in these communities and policing them unsafe, must be addressed. To some extent, this is a question of the physical design — good sightlines and lighting, fewer enclosed spaces and dead ends — but, to a great extent, it is a question of social design.

Attractive and welcoming places to play and gather must be created; zoning, regulatory and tax incentives should be used where needed to bring services and stores back to communities now without them; and community markets and festivals must be encouraged and supported. All of these must be seen as core public investments in reducing the roots of violence involving youth, not as optional extras.

Youth Engagement

(i) Sports and the Arts

Few deny the positive impacts of engagement in sports and the arts. If anything, it is necessary to remind people that the arts can be just as positive for youth as sports.

We join the many who believe that the benefits of youth sports and arts programs can be significant and far-reaching. Being on a sports team, in a choir, or in an art or music studio with others, can instil a sense of community and belonging. Group programs promote mutual respect, from which self-worth and individual responsibility develop. Sports and arts programs also provide a context for setting goals and seeing the relationship between effort and results. Success in these programs increases confidence and self-esteem among participants. Offered in schools, these programs can be incentives to stay in an academic environment.

For those who do not learn well in a traditional academic setting, sports and arts programs can provide non-traditional opportunities to learn problem-solving and other life skills. Learning ceramics and photography can involve chemistry, physics, math, computer skills, reading, history, cultural knowledge, organization and sequential thinking. Learning a musical instrument develops motor skills and enhances mathematical ability.

One of the key factors for resiliency in children and youth is having positive experiences with supportive people in situations that add structure to their lives. Programs that attract and provide skilled and caring sports coaches or art teachers "address children's needs for adult support and provide role models, often making an impression on youngsters who might otherwise surrender to hostility and hopelessness." (Weitz, 1996: 14).

Despite these many benefits, there are numerous barriers to participation in sports and arts programs. These include material barriers, such as a lack of income, time or transportation, and others, such as a lack of social supports and lack of awareness when parents do not encourage participation.

Many children and youth face several of these barriers at once or are confronted by the reality that there simply are not enough places for youth to engage in recreation, whether that be organized sports or some form of fitness activity. There is a similar shortage of space for engaging youth in arts. Sports equipment, art supplies, musical instruments, coaches, advisers and teachers seem to be in short supply where they are most needed, or to be rationed by cost or fees where they are least affordable.

What is required in Ontario is a greater recognition that arts and sports programs are not frills, but are integral to the development of our youth. They address alienation, low self-esteem, a limited capacity for self-expression and other immediate risk factors for violence involving youth. These programs should not be seen as optional, but rather as a core right of all youth. Where parents cannot reasonably afford to provide them, these programs must be available at the expense of the broader community. Our future as a province suffers when this is not done.

Where sports are concerned, there is a need to ensure the cultural relevance of what is being offered in each community: cricket or baseball? There is also a need to recall that, in our context, the goal is not sport development, but rather youth development through sports. Whether we speak of character development, health issues such as the avoidance of obesity, or being occupied in a positive way between 3 p.m. and 6 p.m. after school, the potential for youth development through sports is significant.

This potential will be augmented when engagement in sports is accompanied by opportunities for mentorship and for learning teamwork, structure and discipline. In a very useful literature review provided to us by the University of Toronto (*The Use of Sport to Foster Child and Youth Development and Education*), some of the key conclusions included:

- Research indicates that the benefits of sports participation and sports initiatives for children and youth cannot be understood in isolation from other social and material conditions.
- The skills and enthusiasm of trained, committed administrators, coaches and volunteers is key to the success of child- and youth-focused sports programs.
- To be successful, sports programs should be part of a multi-agency approach to meeting the needs of child and youth development (Donnelly et al., 2007: 31).

We apply the same reasoning to arts programs and encourage Ontario to provide its youth with culturally specific and fully accessible opportunities to learn core social and life skills through the arts, ideally through programs that are integrated with other community and family activities. The goal here is not to produce career artists, but to engage youth through creativity, attracting and challenging them, teaching them self-expression and involving them in positive ways with people who live in their communities.

The potential for effective youth arts programs is vast. In a forthcoming paper on youth arts policies in Canada, *One Hundred Musicians! Youth Arts Policy in Canada*, Joyce Zemans and Amanda Cole noted that their review of the literature confirms that effective youth arts:

- Represent an effective outreach tool — arts programming appeals to a diverse range of youth populations and engage youth for sustained periods; stimulate learning motivation, have a positive impact on academic performance and cultivate creative thinking and problem-solving abilities

- Improve individual self-esteem, confidence and conflict-resolution skills, decrease anxiety and depression and provide opportunities for developing new friendships and positive social networks

- Support healthy and supportive community environments for youth engagement; promote intercultural exchange, mentoring and role-modelling with both community leaders and peers; enhance community participation and positively impact residents' perceptions of their neighbourhood

- Provide employment skills and training, promote investment in the community and have a positive financial impact on social services through improvement in crime, health and education indicators (Creative City Network of Canada, 2007; Wright et al., 2004, 2005 cited in Zemans and Coles, 2009).

Our experience supports those research findings and also the recent British conclusion that "the arts have the potential to transform lives and communities and to promote social inclusion, neighbourhood renewal and cultural citizenship" (Arts Council, England, 2005). We note a growing trend in many countries to invest in youth by promoting their involvement in creative activities, and have been advised that this flows from research showing that:

- Youth crave relevant cultural programs.

- Arts and culture programs are especially effective in engaging vulnerable and marginalized youth.

- Youth arts programs are cost-effective and provide a bridge to broader civic engagement.

While we would not measure the benefits of the arts by looking only at their direct impacts on crime prevention, we note this potential, as set out in *Doing the Arts Justice: A Review of Research Literature, Practice and Theory* (Hughes):

> In prevention contexts with young people, evaluation studies provide evidence that arts programmes can reduce offending behaviour and incidents of disruption, help disaffected young people re-engage with education, and sponsor personal and social development....
>
> Specifically, four types of impact are identified: changing individuals' personal, internal responses to drivers or triggers that lead to offending; changing the social circumstances of individuals' lives by equipping them with personal and social skills that can help them build different relationships and access opportunities in work and education; changing and enriching institutional culture and working practices; changing wider communities' views of offenders and the criminal justice system (Hughes, 2005: 10 and 11).

These are all very valuable benefits, but we stress the broader social and community benefits we noted earlier. From whatever perspective is adopted, we nonetheless stress that, without participation, there are no benefits.

Regrettably, as we noted above, there are simply not enough programs and places for youth to engage in the arts or in recreational sports in Ontario and too many barriers to those that exist. Well-resourced and readily accessible sports and arts centres must be available to all youth in Ontario, with immediate priority for those now growing up in disadvantaged communities. Youth need to be involved in meaningful ways in choosing what programs are offered. Both the programs and the core staff providing them need to be on a stable footing. The programming cycles for arts, or for recreational sports, need to be as reliable as those in traditional and established elite team sports — they must be something all youth can count on.

(ii) Mentors

One of the things we heard that resonated most with us was the comment that all youth need an adult who is "unconditionally crazy about them." Families and extended families provide this for many youth, and many parents are both mentors and inspirations for their children. But other youth will only obtain this benefit from mentors outside their families. There are countless mentoring programs in Ontario, full of dedicated volunteers who are making a real contribution to the health (and safety) of our communities.

We are in no position to assess these programs, nor to recommend one over the other. We have, however, been advised of some core principles, which we think should guide Ontario in expanding these initiatives to ensure universal access to all youth who need this support.

Those principles are not complex. The mentoring relationship must be seen as a serious one: seriously entered into and seriously carried out. Care needs to be taken to match mentors with youth to maximize the chances of a positive and sustained relationship. Most mentors will then benefit from both training and support. Mentoring must be meaningful and involve real engagement with the youth in positive activities. Mentoring must be sustained: a short-term involvement with a vulnerable youth can often do more harm than good, leaving the youth disillusioned. Some have suggested that a two-year commitment is required (Wortley, Literature Review, Crime Prevention, Volume 5). And finally, the value of integrating mentoring with other activities that help link youth to their families, schools and communities cannot be overstated.

(iii) A Voice for Youth

As pointed out in Chapter 4, youth who are already at risk of being alienated from society will have that sense reinforced when they do not have opportunities to be heard on issues that directly and immediately affect their lives. And yet, as we have noted, although youth have much to offer, there are few opportunities for their voices to be heard when agendas are being set, policy is being made or significant decisions are being taken.

We think that initiatives such as the Toronto Youth Cabinet need to become much more widely available. That initiative features a standing committee of youth, which advises city council on a wide range of issues. Governments at all levels, community organizations and service providers need to see the value of having youth within their governance structures. And they need to recognize that such participation must be encouraged and supported, and not just made available to those who come forward.

But providing a seat at the table is not enough. Most youth need mentoring and support to play a meaningful role at the table and not to be simply a token. And often, the adult participants need training to fully appreciate how to work — and share power — with youth. Obtaining the youth voice must be seen as a long-term, two-way investment, requiring energy and commitment from an organization. We are convinced that when this approach is taken, important voices are added to the discussion, decisions are enriched and an important contribution to youth development is made.

But it is important to reach out to youth who would otherwise not know of or be able to take advantage of these opportunities. Obtaining a youth voice is important in its own right, but it is also important as an opportunity to engage women, immigrants, Aboriginal youth and youth of colour, and youth from any background, who are not already doing well. This will not only assist those youth with their development, but also will send a significant message of inclusion to their peers and families.

In a similar vein, we also see a need to support youth-led organizations. We address this in Pillar 3 and include it here only to note that it is an important way to engage youth — not only the youth in the organization, but all the youth served by it. There is an undeniable impact on the imagination when youth see their contemporaries not only running significant institutions and as sources of advice and assistance, but also as valued by the rest of society for so doing.

(iv) Youth Workers

Youth engagement of course extends beyond the three areas we have outlined in this section. It is a journey rather than a destination, and there are many roads that lead in the right direction. What matters most, it seems to us, is to focus on the strengths and capacities of youth and use these as building blocks to help provide opportunities in the present and hope for the future.

To help accomplish this, the role of youth workers will need ongoing attention. There are numerous areas where youth workers can play valuable roles. These range from helping schools and youth understand each other and connecting youth with arts and sports programs to getting youth involved in community hubs and being part of gang-exit strategies.

When selected from and, ideally, living in disadvantaged communities, these workers provide powerful bridges to the most disadvantaged youth, those who would very likely not be reached otherwise. With all youth, they can bring an age and cultural relevance, which can make key connections. And, of course, they provide youth employment, including in supervisory positions, and role models for other youth.

For these reasons, we believe that the government should more formally recognize the contribution and value of youth workers. This primarily involves paying attention to the stability of their employment, in part by making sustained commitments to the organizations that employ them and in part by supporting wages that will attract and retain highly skilled staff.

But it also includes providing developmental opportunities and linking youth workers as much as possible to each other and to the broader communities in which they work. Much of this can be done through "virtual networks" and video-conferencing. And part needs to be done by providing ways for youth workers to have time to travel and engage with and learn from each other. This keeps the focus of their work on local communities, where they can build strong relationships with youth, while at the same time providing opportunities for broader learning and engagement.

Overall, there is an important supporting role for the Province to play in relation to youth workers, which, in turn, will greatly enhance the capacity of numerous programs to address the roots of violence involving youth.

Youth Economic Opportunity

Providing economic opportunity for disadvantaged youth is a multi-faceted challenge, one that requires progress on many of the other roots we have identified. The required efforts include:

- Finding ways to make education attractive and relevant, and to have educational attainment valued and supported by families, peers and communities
- Providing housing that is conducive to study and to hope in the future
- Building networks of opportunity and contacts, which include the disadvantaged
- Helping parents get good jobs commensurate with their education and skills and in other ways motivate youth and develop role models for them
- Removing the discriminatory barriers that hold some youth back from employment and advancement
- Providing more local employment opportunities and improving access to transportation for the more distant opportunities
- Providing job-readiness and coaching, and having employers who are willing to help youth succeed.

Because of the need to deal with these kinds of issues, we believe that a youth economic opportunity strategy must go well beyond making available summer, part-time or entry-level work. We see value in those initiatives and encourage those who are involved in them, but more is needed to get at the roots of the immediate risk factors for violence involving youth.

When more is provided, we will see another of the virtuous cycles we have mentioned in our report. Positive action on issues like housing quality or educational attainment will not only address alienation, impulsivity and low self-esteem and strengthen communities, but will at the same time help youth want and obtain meaningful employment. This, in turn, will put these youth on positive paths, reduce the reach of the roots, provide good role models for other youth and further strengthen their communities. This positive cycle will then renew itself with ever more positive results.

It follows that much of what we feel needs to be done to provide economic opportunity for youth has already been outlined in earlier sections of this pillar. We will accordingly address in this section only the efforts that are required to supplement those foundational initiatives. In doing so, we will focus to a fair extent on the private sector, but note that much of the fundamental underlying work falls to governments.

There is a critical need to create opportunity for marginalized youth, for whom its lack often intersects with other roots, such as poverty and racism, and can engender the immediate risk factors for violence involving youth. This is not to say that simply providing jobs to economically marginalized youth will necessarily reduce violence or solve the various challenges they face. Instead, it points to the need for comprehensive programs that provide both economic opportunities and multiple supports to help these youth overcome the entrenched barriers to their success.

Such holistic programs can only be developed with the leadership of Ontario's private sector. As we established in Chapter 8, a number of businesses across the Province have adopted innovative projects that serve both their organizational needs and support economically marginalized youth. These programs, which range from apprenticeship opportunities to skills development and employment measures for economically marginalized youth, are to be encouraged. They recognize that investing in Ontario's disadvantaged youth helps provide a stable and qualified workforce for years to come, and helps to support the long-term economic prosperity and safety that will attract and retain the knowledge workers and creative workers the Province needs for its long-term health.

To our way of thinking, there is a very important public-private partnership opportunity here. The public sector — including all orders of government — is well placed to take on the task of assisting youth with job-readiness. Beyond education and training, this means providing the kind of coaching that many parents provide: how to prepare for an interview, how to dress and act at work and how to deal with early frustrations and pressures. In some circumstances, governments might even pre-screen candidates to reduce the interview burden on employers and to identify ways in which candidates could improve their presentations. And perhaps governments could help address concerns businesses have about even a minor criminal record by helping a youth demonstrate that they have left their past behind or perhaps, in some cases, providing a bond or some other security for an employer.

Employers could in return be expected to create environments that are welcoming and supportive: to take some extra time in the first weeks or months of employment to help the youth succeed and to make allowances for what may be some growing pains on both sides. Existing staff, as well as the youth, could need some training or coaching in this regard. Ideally, employers would also work hard to find advancement opportunities for youth from disadvantaged communities in light of the powerful impacts these would have well beyond the youth involved.

The core issue remains, however, finding employers who will take the time to make the kind of social investment needed to create these jobs and retain youth in them. Governments need to play this role when they are the employer and need to encourage all the agencies they fund to do likewise. But governments also need to help the private sector play its role.

Consideration needs to be given to regulatory, tax or other incentives for business, which either create jobs within disadvantaged communities or create lasting jobs elsewhere with advancement potential for youth from these communities. We are not talking about subsidies for short-term, entry-level jobs, but incentives for jobs that, by their location or duration, will make a meaningful difference to disadvantaged communities.

On the private sector side, one of the issues seems to be that there is a lot of employment potential in smaller businesses, which might not be able to afford the kind of social investment in youth that we contemplate. At the same time, larger employers might not have enough relevant positions to offer. It seems to us that those employers that are willing to be part of the solution to the youth employment problem could be encouraged to provide business-to-business support to help smaller employers meaningfully employ youth.

In essence, larger businesses that are doing well could "adopt" a local business community through initiatives such as supporting a coach, ideally a youth outreach worker, who could assist a number of area employers to integrate youth into their workforce, providing the two-way cultural bridging we discussed elsewhere.

Or a sector such as banking or mining or insurance might organize itself to support a fund for one or more priority neighbourhoods for this purpose, or to directly support small businesses that are willing to create the kind of meaningful jobs we have discussed. The accumulation of a significant number of relatively small contributions into one fund could make an enormous difference to a community — one potentially greater than if each large employer invested the same amount in bringing youth to their enterprise.

Apart from these job-creation initiatives, the Province needs to address the discrimination that many youth and adults face when they seek employment. Ontario's new human rights system, with a commission freed-up to address systemic issues, an enhanced, expert and expedited tribunal process and specialized advocacy assistance for claimants, is very promising in this regard. But it will only be able to make a difference if youth and other claimants are aware of it and have easy access to it.

Two possible ways to achieve this occur to us. First, funding could be made available to the human rights legal support centre to train youth outreach workers on human rights law, and perhaps to engage them to help potential claimants understand their rights, complete the application form and manage their way through the process from beginning to end. Second, the community legal clinics could similarly be resourced to make these services available in all disadvantaged communities across the province. Given the structure of the clinic system, this could encompass work within communities of interest as well as geographic communities. In Pillar 3, we suggested that the clinics could be resourced to work with and assist the Neighbourhood Strategic Partnerships; this additional role on human rights issues would be a natural complement to that role.

Finally, the Province needs to find ways to encourage the entrepreneurial skills of youth. While many see youth only as employees and not as employers or self-employed, the Grassroots Youth Collaborative has stressed the interest many youth have in creating their own jobs and jobs for others.

What would be needed is a venture capital fund, which would allow youth to finance good business plans. The university-college-community partnership we discuss in Pillar 3, or businesses that had "adopted" a community, could play a key role in helping youth develop those plans. The transformative power of letting youth shape their own futures and create jobs for other youth would extend well beyond the involved youth.

We note as well that, if our advice on supporting youth-led organizations and on expanding and stabilizing employment opportunities for youth workers is followed, a significant number of good youth jobs will be created. These will provide key contacts in, and role models for, many communities, and also allow the youth workers to build impressive resumés for their other career options.

There no doubt are other ways to advance economic opportunities for youth. We believe that the ones we have mentioned have merit, but encourage the private sector and the orders of government to come together to find creative and sustainable ways to give hope and opportunity to the youth who need it the most.

The Justice System

Introduction and Context

In this section, we address a significant number of ways in which the justice system could become a more integral and coherent part of a social context that works well for all the youth of Ontario. These fall into seven main categories, all of which are linked but each of which has some unique elements. We address them separately, but stress their connections to each other and indeed to many of the other elements in Pillar 1.

The need for change in each of these categories was demonstrated in Chapter 4. There we saw how the criminal justice system, while generally used to good effect, can nonetheless also be used in counterproductive ways when the exercise of its powers leads to the inappropriate treatment of youth and to over-criminalization. When this happens, it generates — needlessly — feelings of alienation, low self-esteem, unfairness and injustice, or creates a lack of belonging or hope and can operate as a root of the immediate risk factors for violence involving youth, even though those working within it would seek to have it be anything but.

By way of context for what we think needs to be done to remedy this, we start with two general observations. First, Canada has a legislative framework for youth justice, which provides for tough sentences and good, secure treatment options to deal with youth who represent a danger to the public, and for sanctions outside the formal justice system for youth who do not. It also provides legislative support for the use of police discretion as to whether to bring a youth into the criminal justice system at all and sets out important principles, such as recognizing the developmental stages through which youth pass.

It seems to us that this framework, the 2003 *Youth Criminal Justice Act*, represents a reasonable balancing of the need for toughness, where that is required to protect society, with firm, non-criminalizing approaches, where they best advance society's interests. Both the governing principles it sets out and the legal framework it establishes provide sensible standards to protect society — in the short run — by incapacitating some youth and, in the long run, by maintaining a focus on our ability as a society to keep most youth on the path to productive roles in society, if we choose to pursue that objective.

Leading to our second general observation is the fact that the Act permits the provinces and territories to implement these provisions in various ways. Provinces and territories have real discretion as to what they will resource and how they will exercise the options provided by the Act. They can promote the use of intensive treatment options and community resources, or they can press for the use of jails. The Act permits and supports a balanced approach to youth justice in any given jurisdiction, but does not require one.

Our second general observation, then, is that, despite some significant moves in the right direction since 2003, Ontario has not begun to catch up to provinces such as British Columbia, Alberta and Quebec, which, measured by incarceration rates, take a less-punitive approach to the implementation of the Act. In the paper they prepared for us, published in Volume 4, professors Caputo and Vallée note as well that Ontario formally charges proportionally more youth than the other three large jurisdictions in Canada. After considering the possible reasons for this, they stated:

> This leads us to conclude that it is likely not the nature of the offences or the level of crime that can help explain the charging practices in Ontario. The role of the police and Crown attorney must be assessed with respect to charging policies and practices (Caputo and Vallée, Volume 4: 261).

In particular, we note that Quebec, which appears to charge proportionally about half as many youth as Ontario, has long been known in Canada for bringing a more social than legalistic approach to youth who commit offences, with there being no suggestion over the last 30 years that it is any less safe as a result.

Additionally, Ontario seems to still rely excessively on incarceration as a way of dealing with youth who are charged, including non-violent youth. Ontario has dramatically reduced the absolute number of youth in jail, a move we applaud, but still favours incarceration more than is the norm in this country. We note with some dismay that in 2006, Ontario, with about 40 per cent of Canada's youth population, was responsible for about 54 per cent of all youth custodial sentences in the country. This is a big proportional jump from 2002-03, when Ontario incarcerated 45 per cent of the incarcerated youth in Canada (Caputo and Vallée, Volume 4: 257).

While there are many encouraging developments in the approach to youth justice in Ontario since 2003, and some figures suggest that Ontario is heading towards a more balanced approach to youth justice, its charging and incarceration rates are troubling. And no evidence has been brought to our attention to suggest that Ontario is safer as a result of the approach it is taking.

It also troubles us that in Ontario two out of every three sentences of incarceration are for non-violent offences, suggesting that the long-term negative effects of jail on youth outlined later in this chapter are being incurred for reasons that are not related to violent crime. Where incarceration creates alienation and a lack of empathy or hope in a youth who is jailed for a non-violent offence, as it often can do, or where it leads to association with youth gangs, it may have the effect of producing rather than deterring violence.

It also seems to be the case that in Ontario many sentences are very short, with, as Prof. Tony Doob advised us, half being less than 30 days in length. Ontario's data cannot show to what extent this is accounted for because allowance is being made for pretrial incarceration, but if any significant proportion of youth is being sent to jail for this period of time, the consequences are manifestly counterproductive. It is just long enough to stigmatize a youth in their own mind and the minds of others, disrupt their education or employment, label them as a serious criminal, expose them 24/7 to many youth who are a danger, and destroy their self-esteem and sense of hope, without being long enough to represent a specific deterrence in their lives.

Incarceration of this kind cannot be seen as a strategic use of expensive (in many senses of the word) resources. Its use suggests that incarceration is very often not being relied upon to protect the public from serious offenders, but rather to send some kind of message to youth who pose no significant public safety risk. Our view on this can be simply stated: exercise great caution before using the courts to send a message to youth, as they often send the wrong one. The courts should not be used just because no other alternative has been made available, or because someone feels that this will be a salutary experience for a youth.

Overall, in the absence of a stated objective governing the youth justice system in Ontario, as discussed below we can only infer one from the message that arises from the daily actions of the many separate individuals within the system. Those actions tell us that, even though charging and incarceration rates have dropped significantly, Ontario still sees public protection primarily through an immediate, short-term lens. That lens is far too narrowly focused on immediate punishment and control, rather than on responding to crime and protecting the public by strategically using treatment options and effective sanctions, which also address the long-term safety and health of the province by strengthening youth, families and communities to prevent future crime.

With this by way of general context, we will go on to discuss the seven areas in which Ontario could modify its approach to youth justice to better address the roots of violence involving youth, while ensuring that the public is protected from those youth who present a real danger to it. We start with the overarching themes of coherence, strategy and integration, and then discuss separately our thoughts on specific initiatives for the police, Crown attorneys, judges and the correctional services.

(i) A Policy Framework

The youth justice system in Ontario does not operate as an integral part of an overall strategy for youth in this province, nor does it work from a shared sense of desired outcomes for youth and ways to achieve them. We set out the basis for this kind of provincial outcomes-based youth strategy in the next part of this chapter (Pillar 2). What matters in the immediate context is that, without such a framework, and most particularly without specific outcomes to work towards, the justice system is defined by the consequences of a large number of individual decisions rather than by a coherent set of policy objectives. As noted above, at present, that definition now features the use of short-term, inward-looking and often unstrategically punitive responses to youth behaviour.

While we cannot fault the justice system for not being part of an overall youth policy framework, which has yet to be created, we can express concern that it has operated to date without a framework to guide the three ministries that operate it. Beyond being referred to in the broad policies articulated within the federal government's *Youth Criminal Justice Act*, we could find no articulated approach to the business of Ontario's youth justice system, no collective vision for the use of the wide discretion provided by the Act and no statement of the outcomes the system as a whole is seeking to produce.

We believe that the absence of a shared policy framework has contributed in no small measure to the concerns we outline in this report. The overall youth policy framework we call for in our next pillar will provide a vital new orientation for youth justice in Ontario and, we believe, help address those concerns.

(ii) Someone in Charge

The problems that flow from the lack of an overall strategy for youth in Ontario are exacerbated by the fact that no ministry appears to have overall responsibility or accountability for the system or its outcomes. The Attorney General controls prosecution policy and funds an extra-judicial sanctions program through youth justice committees. Local police services, with little or no overall guidance from the Province, have their own policies on how to police youth, when to intervene, and when to do so through criminalization as opposed to warnings or formal extra-judicial measures. The Ministry of Children and Youth Services, in turn, is responsible for funding some of the programs that can be used as alternatives to court proceedings, and thus can limit or encourage the use of alternatives by the police, but only from a distance. And that ministry controls youth corrections and probation, youth protection services and youth mental health services.

This divided and un-aligned jurisdiction can lead to mixed messages within the system, to resources not being allocated where they can do the most good and to the actions of one part of the system undoing the value of investments in other parts of it. One example of the lack of coordination, which makes the point, lies in the fact that about 45 per cent of all youth justice matters brought to the courts are withdrawn or stayed. Those responsible for the system advised us that this figure relates to the number of youth charged, and not simply the total numbers of charges youth face. They told us that it almost always means that the Crown attorneys have determined that these youth can be effectively dealt with through measures operated outside the traditional justice system.

Given what we know about the limited positive impacts for most youth of continued involvement with the criminal justice system, and the needlessly negative consequences of that involvement for many, we see that exercise of discretion as commendable. But it seems to us it comes too late. By the time this discretion is exercised, many youth have already been labelled as a criminal by themselves, their family, and often their peers and school and stigmatized as such. They have missed school, perhaps many times, to attend court, where they have associated with potentially negative peers and often adults accused of serious offences. They have encountered needless delay between their alleged offence and a sanction. And, of course, society has spent costly justice resources on someone who did not need to be in the formal system at all.

Our point is not that an individual police officer was always wrong to have laid these charges or that the Crown was always right to stay or withdraw them. Rather, it is that with almost half of the youth who are charged being referred out of the courts before the courts have been asked to deal with them, there is an obvious disconnect between two parts of the justice system. Even if the 45-per-cent figure did not mean that this many accused youth have all the charges against them dropped, the problem would be a real one for many youth. A feedback mechanism either does not exist or is being ignored and, more fundamentally, it seems clear that a consistent approach to youth justice is not in place.

In our view, Ontarians are entitled to a youth justice system with shared approaches and outcome goals, and with a consistent approach to its administration. While there are various ways to accomplish this, we think that the depth of the current divide is such that a Youth Justice Advisory Board should be put in place to provide integrated policy and operational advice to the three ministers responsible for youth justice, and to the Cabinet committee we propose be created in Pillar 4.

We do not think that the required coordination would occur simply by asking that one of the three ministries try to assume policy direction over the others, and we doubt that an interministerial committee would provide the kind of leadership needed to deal with the customary ministerial silos. But, even more importantly, a Youth Justice Advisory Board would allow key disciplines, such as education and health, to be formally included in the governance of the youth justice system.

The advisory board we envisage would operate as an agency of the government, reporting jointly to all three ministers. It would be composed of experts in the relevant domains, including policing, community and custodial sanctions, probation, prosecutions, defence, victim services, mental health, child welfare, child and youth advocacy, education, housing, equity and youth development.

The board would have a small staff component to study and assess how the youth justice system operates as a whole, and how its resources could be better aligned to improve consistency and effectiveness. It would identify areas where the different parts of the system were operating at cross-purposes or simply not communicating well with each other, with the rest of Ontario's youth sector or with agencies working with the families or communities of youth. Having regard to the youth outcome goals we discuss in Pillar 2 and hope the government will establish, the board would advise the ministers, the government and the public on the specific measures that would best ensure the justice system's contribution to those goals.

Overall, the board would, as its core responsibility, look across the whole system and the whole budget for it and make recommendations to the ministers on ways to set priorities for the available resources in order to meet defined outcome targets for youth, to align programs and use discretion to provide safety and address the roots of violence involving youth and to ensure consistency across the system.

The board would also be responsible for measuring, monitoring and publishing the results achieved by the system. It would monitor and advise on the impacts of related initiatives in other provincial domains, (e.g., the safe schools provisions or initiatives in child welfare), maintain current information on youth justice approaches in other jurisdictions and develop and publish its own policy proposals. To support the development of its advice, it would be able to commission independent research into relevant youth development, health and justice issues, and related best practices, whether in Ontario or elsewhere.

We have been careful not to call for a lot of new agencies in our report, but this is one we feel is needed if progress is to be made. The serious impacts of unneeded criminalization, the lack of balance in resourcing (discussed below), the deep-seated cultures of independence (generally, but not always, itself a good thing) of parts of the justice system, and the potential for Ontario's justice system to powerfully reinforce — or undercut — expensive youth and social initiatives elsewhere nonetheless lead us to this conclusion.

(iii) A Strategic Approach to Criminalization and Incarceration

Clearly, serious youth crime must be treated seriously. We have said so on many occasions. We accept the need for a criminal law intervention in many cases and the need for serious sanctions for serious crimes, most particularly crimes of serious violence. We also accept and value the role of police enforcement and protection activities. Police presence and interventions are obviously important to deter offences, even minor ones.

But we are not convinced that Ontario's disproportionate use of criminalization and incarceration, compared to the other large provinces, represents a strategic approach to what the police and the rest of the justice system should do once those interventions have taken place. We agree with the comments expressed to us by the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police that, to fight crime, we must invest in youth: we must put the dangerous ones behind bars but otherwise use proven programs to get youth on the right path.

Ontario needs a strategic approach to youth offending that would put those words into action. Careful thought needs to be given to what society's next move is going to be if a criminal law approach, instead of investing in youth, is used to deal with youth behaviour that poses no real risk to public safety, even though it crosses the lines set by our criminal law.

Enforcement, while in the right cases very important, does not address the roots of violence involving youth and so has limited value in preventing future serious crime. The justice system as a whole has but a marginal impact on future offending. In this connection, we were encouraged by the presentation made to us by the deputy minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services in May 2008. That presentation included the following insightful comments, which were echoed by several senior police officers on other occasions:

> Ontario can best prevent youth from becoming involved in criminal activity through investments in education, social services and creating opportunities for disenfranchised youth.
>
> Police and corrections/rehabilitation interventions cannot effectively address youth violence in the absence of education, social service and employment supports that address the root causes and provide alternatives to engagement in crime.

The views of those at the top of the law enforcement system in Ontario are wise and encouraging. What seems to us to be lacking, however, is a consistent, strategic orientation that would put these significant and persuasive words into action on the front lines.

What would a strategic orientation look like on the ground? It would start with the acceptance of the simple reality that many adolescents commit offences. The majority are never detected, and those youth generally go on to be productive citizens. It follows that the youth who are detected should not be reflexively seen as aberrations who need to be made examples of for the good of society, but rather, for the most part, as those who happened to get caught. Their conduct needs to be addressed, sometimes very seriously and within the justice system, and they must always be discouraged from repeating it, but not by isolating them or treating them as if they were part of an irredeemable outlaw class. To do so is to nurture, not address, the immediate risk factors.

A strategic approach would also ensure that the exercise of discretion in the justice system is informed by an understanding of what is normal behaviour for adolescents, what developmental and transitional stages they are going through at different points in their lives and how they are functioning within their families, schools and communities. This understanding should be considered in deciding whether to charge a youth, whether to detain them, what bail terms to seek, what alternatives to the formal system may be appropriate and what penalty to impose if they are convicted. This very approach underpins how Quebec addresses youth justice. Quebec, which has a widely respected approach to dealing with youth crime, sees youth:

> ... first and foremost as young people in a stage of development. They are seen as susceptible to making errors. They have special learning needs and require structure and counselling. They can become productive citizens if appropriate measures are used such as rehabilitation rather than correction. Their criminal responsibility is attenuated and different from adults (Quebec, n.d.: 1, cited in Caputo and Vallée, Volume 4: 247).

The importance of this perspective is reflected in the fact that it has recently been re-affirmed as a constitutional principle by the Supreme Court of Canada. In a recent judgment, speaking on this point for a unanimous Court, Justice Rosalie Abella made the following finding:

> ...because of their age, young people have heightened vulnerability, less maturity and a reduced capacity for moral judgment. This entitles them to a *presumption* of diminished moral blameworthiness or culpability (*R. v. D.B.*, 2008 SCC 25, para. 41).

The Court then went on to determine that the principle of the presumption of diminished culpability is one of fundamental justice, saying:

> .... a broad consensus reflecting society's values and interests exists, namely that the principle of a presumption of diminished moral culpability in young persons is fundamental to our notions of how a fair legal system ought to operate (para. 66).

In reaching this conclusion, the Court quoted the following comment of Prof. Nicholas Bala:

> ...adolescents, and even more so children, lack a fully developed adult sense of moral judgment. Adolescents also lack the intellectual capacity to appreciate fully the consequences of their acts. In many contexts, youth will act without foresight or self-awareness, and they may lack empathy for those who may be the victims of their wrongful acts (Bala, 2003, cited at para. 62).

And the Court went on to cite research by Doob et al. in reaching its own view that "... there is, moreover, evidence suggesting that as a result of this reduced judgment and maturity, young persons respond differently to punishment than adults and harsher penalties do not, by themselves, reduce youth crime." (para. 64).

A strategic approach to youth justice would ensure that all of those exercising discretion in our youth justice system are aware of these realities and taught how to take them into account. There needs to be a full understanding of which behaviours are simply typical or normal for an age or developmental stage, and a full recognition, when discretion is exercised, that while society has an interest in sanctioning some of those behaviours, it should do so in a way that has the best chance of success in light of the developmental and other circumstances of the youth in question.

It is not that we expect every police officer to be an expert on this. Consideration could be given in some cases to referring youth for a social services assessment before a charge is laid. This assessment would consider the youth's circumstances and their ability to benefit from the available programs. This is done in Quebec, where, as summarized by Ontario's Ministry of the Attorney General after the May 2008 McMurtry Seminar, "[s]taff in Quebec's alternative measures program meet with the youth's family and consider whether drug treatment, community work or other alternative measures would be more appropriate than laying charges." If this approach were applied in Ontario, the results of this kind of assessment could be considered by the officer before he or she determined whether charges were appropriate. In this way, that crucial decision could be made on the basis of all of the available evidence and information about the youth, including what services might work for them.

This kind of strategic approach to charging, where in many cases the decision to invoke the formal criminal process is made after rather than before the suitability of alternatives has been considered, responds to the reality discussed in Chapter 4 that the decision to proceed within the formal system has enormous implications for most youth, their peers, their family and their future. Having good information on the availability and suitability of alternatives before incurring those implications would improve the outcomes for many youth. Where that is not possible, the police could establish an internal vetting by a more senior officer before charges are laid to help ensure that all available relevant information is considered.

The orientation should not be just what is to be done today with a youth, but should also be to take into account the likely longer-range consequences of the various options. To be clear, we do not call for this analysis before the police intervene to prevent or interrupt a crime or make an arrest — only before they or a Crown attorney decide to continue with a process with so many consequences for all of us.

In this connection, Ontario also needs to address the criminalization that results from policies in place in schools and group homes, which lead to the police being called to respond to even minor infractions. Especially in group homes, where we place our most disadvantaged youth, we should be cautious about criminalizing youth in care who engage in behaviour that, if committed in a family home, would be dealt with away from the justice system. These youth are in care because of the severe disadvantages they are already under, often because of their family circumstances, and should not be further disadvantaged just because they cannot live with their family. In our view, the policies that criminalize them need to be reconsidered in light of a strategic approach to the deployment of the criminal process.

As well, Ontario needs to put in place policies that call upon those exercising discretion to take into account the deeper implications of some of the circumstances of the youth they deal with. For example, as a matter of routine, the police, the Crowns and bail justices of the peace give great weight to the support and attitude of a youth's parents in deciding whether to charge a youth, seek or grant bail or continue with a prosecution. While logical from an immediate "today" perspective, this approach fundamentally fails to recognize that the dysfunctional or disengaged parent is often why the youth is offending, and that to further penalize the youth for this is bound to reinforce the immediate risk factors we have identified.

We do not say that the consideration is not relevant. Instead, we suggest that a strategic orientation would bring the longer-term consequences into consideration, along with the immediate ones. A strategic approach would ask those exercising discretion to look deeper than simply noting that a family is "not supportive." They should be expected to probe to see if alternative supports — including, but not limited to, extended families — are available.

And the government itself should back this more strategic approach by putting in place resources to help ensure that those alternative supports can be sought out and brought to the attention of the Crown and the Court. There have been good examples in Ontario of bail programs that do this, and at present the African-Canadian court worker and social worker program is struggling with precarious funding to help youth find, or the justice system understand, community supports for release or diversion when family supports are lacking. With Ontario's pretrial incarceration rate increasing, programs that can prepare a well-thought-out plan to ensure public safety while a youth is out of jail are needed more than ever before.

The last strategic issue we raise has to do with incarceration following a conviction: it involves looking at the practical consequences of incarceration for youth before that penalty is sought or imposed. We saw above that Ontario relies more heavily on incarceration than the other large provinces. And yet, it is well-known that while time in jail will seriously stigmatize a youth, the prospect of jail does not deter most youth. Most youth think they will never get caught; many others are indifferent to the risk and believe it is worth running because of their limited options in life or because of peer pressure; and others still are even at the point where they believe that, if they are incarcerated, it will constitute a rite of passage and a badge of honour, which will increase their prestige and power in their community.

Despite these attitudes, some of which themselves reflect the immaturity of youth, incarceration will in fact alienate some youth and lower their self-esteem and sense of hope in ways that can reinforce or create the roots of future violence. For others, it will lead to becoming a gang member while in jail and taking that new membership back to their community or to learning new ways to commit crimes on release. From a strategic perspective, society must nevertheless pay these consequential prices when jail is necessary to reflect the risk to society of the offence and the offender, but it should not pay them when it is not. To do so is to give in to a very short-term punitive approach at the direct expense over time of, in many instances, significantly increasing the immediate risk factors for violence involving youth.

To be clear and not be taken out of context on a sensitive topic, we repeat that we are not suggesting in the strategic approach we propose that there should not be incarceration. Rather, we suggest that incarceration should not be used unless necessary, and that the downstream costs of a heightened risk of future violence should be considered, especially when the immediate offence involves property or the administration of justice rather than violence. To punish a property offence in a way that puts Ontarians at risk of future serious violence should not be done lightly.

In summary, the kind of strategic orientation we think should be in place would call on those exercising discretion in the criminal justice system to appreciate the circumstances of youth, and the consequences of decisions about them on the roots of violence involving youth. We should be able to expect that our justice system is managed in a way that requires and supports those who exercise its discretionary powers to "think roots." We believe that they can reasonably be asked to look at least one or two moves beyond the immediate step they are taking to deal with a youth — to focus on where the puck is going to be, as opposed to where it is at any given moment.

(iv) Balanced Resourcing: The Need for Responsive and Available Alternatives

Important as they are, it is not enough to just put in place a policy framework and promote a strategic approach to the use of the youth justice system. The resources to support a strategic approach must also be made available. By this we mean not only training and support for those on the front lines, but as well the ready availability of meaningful sanctions outside the formal justice system. We would define such sanctions as ones that are proportionate to the gravity of the conduct, relevant to the circumstances of the youth and the roots of their offence, and appropriate to meet the public's expectation that they will signal society's disapproval and contribute to bringing a youth back onto the right path.

These kinds of sanctions outside the formal justice system must be available if discretion is to be exercised at all, much less strategically. And yet, in a perhaps unusual example of Toronto having fewer resources than other parts of the province, police officers there, including a deputy chief, told us that there were essentially no alternatives available to the police other than doing nothing or proceeding with a charge. Two small pilot projects were just getting underway when we spoke, but otherwise there were very few, if any, options, or at least very few options that the police knew of and could access easily. The fact that charging rates have dropped without such alternatives does not address the reality that Ontario still disproportionately charges and incarcerates youth, nor does it tell us whether the best long-term results are being obtained for Ontario's youth.

Certainly, the police made it clear to us that they believe that more alternative sanctions should be available to them. We agree. There cannot be a balanced approach if the police and Crowns do not have the same access to effective and credible community-based responses to youth crime as they do to courtrooms and jails. We live in a society where it is a given that police, prosecutors and jails are available as core public services. While all of these sectors claim to be underfunded from time to time, they are all seen as basic services with clear and compelling access to the public purse. We don't withhold from communities whole parts of the justice system, such as courts and prosecutors, until we can find a way to pay for them from discretionary funds.

And yet this is exactly what Ontario does regarding alternatives to the formal justice system. While good data are not available, it appears that Ontario spends less than 10 per cent of its approximate $850-million youth justice budget on alternatives to the formal system (see Chapter 8, page 207). Police officers have told us that they would divert more charges from the courts if community-based sanctions were available and easy to access. They and the Crown attorneys cannot use alternatives, that do not exist. As a general rule, it remains far easier to send a youth to the court system than to an alternative. A simple piece of paper suffices for the former; finding an alternative can be a time-consuming and frustrating exercise for many officers even when alternatives are available.

As we have seen elsewhere in this report, the line between what is mandatory and what is optional is too often drawn by reference to past practice, rather than by current needs. We need to redraw that line so that what we now call the alternatives in youth justice are not alternatives, but rather core elements of an aligned and strategic approach to youth crime with the same priority for funding as any other core element of the system.

(v) Service Integration

We discuss elsewhere in our report the disadvantages faced by youth who are taken into the care of the state. We have also outlined the dramatic extent to which they then become involved in the justice system. To repeat just one example, we were advised by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services that, Canada-wide, these youth are 30 times more likely than other youth to have this involvement.

Much obviously needs to be done to provide services and supports to reduce the disturbing extent to which we are turning needs into risks. In our immediate context, however, much also needs to be done to provide continuity of services and programs when these youth do move back and forth between the child protection and youth justice systems. Their common need for services should predominate over the most immediate reason for which they have been referred for assistance.

This approach would focus on the need for treatment and reflect an orientation around seeing a youth as having a problem, not being one. Both systems deal with youth in difficulty, and the responses can often be the same. It almost certainly has to be cost-effective to have someone manage in an integrated way the services they receive in each system, and where feasible combine those services, but even if cost-neutral there are obvious advantages in providing continuity when a youth moves from one system to the other. There should be an integrated service plan in place for each youth and someone responsible for providing common case-management across the systems.

With one Ontario ministry now being responsible for child welfare, youth custody and many of the extra-judicial sanction programs, we see no reason why this approach could not be brought to Ontario. The efficiency of coordinating services and the logic of looking at the presenting needs of the child rather than the label placed on them both commend this approach to us. With the complementary community-based approach we propose for youth mental health services, the benefits of integration would be even further increased.

(vi) The Police

We of course respect the vital function of policing in this society, understand its complexities and difficulties, and commend those men and women who have chosen this important form of public service. We fully appreciate that the neighbourhood conditions we described in chapters 4 and 5 create enormous challenges for those who police these communities as well as those who live in them. The same conditions that facilitate crime — rundown areas and buildings, limited through streets, poor sightlines, dead ends, dark stairwells and corridors, overcrowding — all create risks for police officers as well as potentially hardening their attitudes to those who are forced to live in these conditions. In light of these conditions, we applaud the countless ways individual officers go beyond the call of duty to try to support youth and prevent crime, as well as to carry out their often-onerous enforcement obligations. We also applaud the balanced statements of senior police officers and of senior officials in the ministry responsible for policing in Ontario.

We nonetheless have three serious concerns about the way policing is carried out on the streets. Two of these have already been addressed above. The first, over-criminalization, is sometimes a structural resourcing question as opposed to an issue of how police discretion is used, although we believe that the value of strategic thinking about the consequences of their decisions should be more widely communicated to, and such thinking more generally expected from, front-line officers. The second, systemic racism, while by no means limited to policing, is a fundamental concern, which we have already addressed in some detail above. The remaining issue is the aggressive approach sometimes taken to policing, both as it affects youth and their peers and as it affects whole communities. How far up the chain of command support for this aggressive "take control" approach extends is difficult to ascertain from one day to the next, but it is high enough that long-standing concerns about it remain unaddressed.

While our focus in this section of our report as a whole is on youth justice, we do not in this particular connection confine our remarks about police conduct to interactions with youth as they are defined by the *Youth Criminal Justice Act*. Overly aggressive and uncivil police behaviour to any member of a community can send clear messages throughout that community about fairness, trust in the police and belonging to the wider community.

We emphasize that we are not debating the wisdom of policing strategies. We have published in Volume 4 an insightful paper by Prof. Doob and his colleagues on what the evidence tells us about some of those strategies and commend it to those who wish to pursue this topic. For present purposes, we wish only to reflect on the concerns we often heard about how these strategies are implemented. The idea of policing by suppression — by a large show of force — may be the right short-term approach in some circumstances. But as the police themselves told us, suppression cannot be sustained. Inevitably, problems arise elsewhere, sometimes because the suppression itself has simply moved them. When it does, resources go elsewhere.

When they do, safety then turns in large measure on what the community is left to deal with when the extra police resources are withdrawn. If the suppression efforts have been done with firmness, but also civility and respect, they may have achieved some lasting benefits without alienating youth and their community. But where they are carried out aggressively, with tactics that intimidate and often belittle, and where as a result the community is alienated and bridges between the police and the community are destroyed, then for the reasons we outlined in Chapter 4 these tactics have every potential to contribute to the growth of alienation, a sense of injustice and other roots of violence involving youth.

The issue of police attitude extends beyond how major suppression efforts are carried out, although that raises particular concerns. In our view, every officer must be trained, supported and expected to think about the impact of their attitude, as well as their actions, on the immediate risk factors for violence. Again, to avoid being taken out of context, we stress that this does not mean that an officer must refrain from intervening when crime is suspected or expose themselves or others to risk. We want simply to say that, apart from such situations, there is both time and a need for mature, strategic thinking about the roots of violence involving youth.

Yes, youth may often be unresponsive, confrontational or rude. But it is the officer who is paid to be the adult and who can reasonably be expected to take the high road. Policing through intimidation has no place in a society. It alienates individuals, promotes disrespect of the police in large segments of communities and makes impossible the kind of relationships and community mobilization the police themselves say they need to make a difference. When it does so, it powerfully creates and reinforces the immediate risk factors for violence in entire communities.

A long-run solution is a more representative police force, one with officers who come from and ideally live in and near the communities they serve. It also involves a culture shift to valuing and rewarding longer-term approaches to preventing crime by contributing to stronger, more involved communities and to youth seeing a positive future in them. And it includes immediate actions by police leaders to curb unnecessarily aggressive and uncivil behaviour by their officers.

Senior police officers spoke to us of their "unwaivering belief" in crime prevention (the Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police), yet in practice do not seem to see that, from a roots perspective, it must be integral to how all policing is done and not considered a separate function, however valued. To be effective, crime prevention, especially the prevention of future crimes of violence, needs to be front and centre in the way all policing is carried out, and particularly in interactions with youth.

(vii) Crown Attorneys

As with the police, we have already addressed issues concerning the Crown attorneys in relation to a strategic orientation and over-criminalization. We want to add only three further considerations. The first is specialization in youth justice; the second is the Crown attorney's broad responsibilities for the administration of justice; and the third is the apparent disconnect between the Crown attorney system and some racialized communities.

The complex interaction of law and policy, and of punishment and social services, call for a unique blend of skills in those who exercise the Attorney General's discretionary powers over the administration of youth justice. They require a deep knowledge of child development and an understanding of the availability and best use of community services, on top of a sophisticated grasp of all the Charter and other jurisprudence that are part of any Crown's working life.

For some years in Ontario there was a perception that the Crowns who worked in youth courts were "kiddie crowns," whose work was less important than what went on in the adult courts. Especially, but not only, from the perspective of influence over the roots of violence involving youth, this is plainly wrong.

We were happy to have been told that this attitude is dying out, and that senior and skilled Crowns are devoting significant parts of their careers to this specialized field. We applaud and support that development. We recognize that not all Crown offices are large enough to support that specialization. Where they are not, the youth in that community should not be disadvantaged; those Crowns must have the training and the easy access to mentors and leaders to support their bringing a similar degree of knowledge, if not always experience, to their work.

We speak here not of specialized knowledge of jurisprudence. We speak instead to the need for current knowledge of effective and available community alternatives, and to knowledge of youth development stages and other factors that need to be taken into account in determining the best response to a youth's behaviour. The discretion these Crowns exercise needs to be as informed by youth development and community resources as is the discretion exercised by specialists in the field.

The second issue we want to raise relates to the role that Crown attorneys should play as local ministers of justice. This role was first widely articulated some 35 years ago by the then deputy Attorney General, the late Frank Callaghan. He made it very clear to all of Ontario's Crown attorneys that they have a broad and important responsibility in relation to the administration of justice in Ontario. Their role is not confined to an individual case, but extends to how justice is experienced by all residents of Ontario's communities. It includes a fundamental obligation to balance equity and fairness.

We raise this role in our report because we believe this responsibility applies whenever racism comes to the attention of a Crown attorney. If, as we have been told is the case, stereotypical and sometimes racist comments are found in police reports on bail, we believe that the Crown should have an obligation to draw that to the attention of the officer in question and, where necessary, his or her senior officers. Including a document containing this kind of information in a disclosure package for defence counsel is not an answer. Silence by an agent of the Attorney General cannot be allowed to imply their acceptance of such remarks.

The link to the roots of violence involving youth is subtle, but important. An officer may not be aware of the systemic racism or stereotypes inherent in some remarks and, if they are, may feel that their attitudes are condoned by the Crown if there is no reaction to them. If so, their behaviour on the streets will stay the same. Whether this manifests itself in overt racism or is simply apparent to the community by more subtle behaviours, it feeds the immediate risk factors we have identified.

Similarly, we believe that if a presiding justice or court official acts oppressively or in a discriminatory or belittling way towards an accused or a witness, as we have been told happens from time to time, it is the Crown attorney who must stand up for the wider interests of the administration of justice. The Attorney General's proper concern about this conduct and its consequences should, if the conduct is that of a justice, be put on the record to ensure that no one in the courtroom has the impression that the Attorney General is in any way associated with such conduct. In some cases we believe that the matter should then be followed up with the office of the chief justice of the court in question.

While the link to alienation, lack of self-esteem, unfairness and the other roots from written police submissions is indirect, the link to in-court conduct is more immediate because it takes place in a court and it generally occurs in a public, embarrassing and memorable way. Justices and court staff need to be aware of this and asked to think strategically and long-term about their conduct.

Where that does not end this behaviour, an immediate response in the courtroom is needed to try to minimize these negative impacts. And, of course, Crown attorneys must ensure that their own conduct and demeanour do not give rise to similar concerns.

The last issue we wish to raise in relation to Crown attorneys is what we heard about their limited interaction with racialized communities and the need for a greater recognition of why this matters. Some have told us that, as a practical matter, it is easier to engage the police on issues of racism than it is the Crowns. And yet, it is the discretion exercised by Crowns that, in the final analysis, determines what charges will be proceeded with, what bail terms will be sought and what sanctions should be agreed to in a plea bargain or sought if a trial ends in a conviction.

These are all issues of enormous impact on a youth and their community. They cannot be optimally determined without the kinds of contextual information we have already discussed, including an understanding of the youth, their family and their community. With particular reference to racialized communities, we are not convinced that Crowns will routinely have that knowledge if they are not exposed to members of those communities.

To avoid any misunderstanding, we note that we are not calling into question the vital principle of the independence of the Crown. Instead, we are saying that the public interest test that the Crowns have long applied should be informed by a full contextual understanding so that it can lead to addressing the wrong a youth has done in a way that best puts them on the path to a positive and productive future.

This is not only a question of sensitivity training, but also one of ongoing contact and communication. A good way to start to promote that is through local consultative bodies, such as race equity advisory committees, which could work with local Crown attorney offices to bring the most locally relevant social context information to their attention on a sustained and ongoing basis.

(viii) Courts

We have four issues to raise in relation to the judiciary and the courts. We do so in full recognition of the independence of our judges and, for the most part, simply wish to draw these matters to their attention for consideration as they see appropriate.

The first issue is to encourage justices dealing with bail matters to consider the full social context of those before them. As we have already noted, youth may often seem to be unattractive candidates for bail because they do not have a stable home, or lack someone to be a surety and supervise them, or because their family is uninterested and uncooperative. And yet these youth are often in difficulty for exactly those reasons. To deny bail because of circumstances of disadvantage beyond the youth's control can easily drive alienation and a lack of hope.

A similar issue can arise if a condition of bail is imposed that requires counselling for substance abuse or mental health issues as a term of release. We were told that these services are largely unavailable and that many youth languish in custody because of a condition they have no power to fulfil. A youth whose parents have resources may well be able to pay for these services, thus furthering the disadvantaged youth's sense of unfairness and oppression.

We realize that justices cannot control the circumstances we mention and must exercise their discretion in accordance with the criminal law. But we think that the strategic approach we discussed above could lead to a careful examination of this broader context and to a more fulsome consideration of whether the inevitable incarceration, if the condition is imposed, is really what will further the long-term interests of justice.

The second issue is what we heard about judicial conduct. We discussed in Chapter 4 and immediately above the negative impacts certain attitudes and approaches can have. But we are also aware of the opposite — how a presiding justice can make a positive difference to a youth's life by a thoughtful and considerate intervention.

We understand, for example, that research and work done by Canada's National Judicial Institute to prepare judicial education programming shows that treating youth with respect and civility, engaging them in what is taking place in the courtroom and introducing what has been called a therapeutic approach to the process and to sentencing has a favourable impact on how well those youth do when they leave the courtroom. Excellent training on this approach is available from the institute and needs to be provided to all judicial officers dealing with youth.

It follows, of course, that if positive treatment in the courtroom has positive effects, negative treatment is, at a minimum, a lost opportunity and may also have negative effects.

Whatever immediate reason or rationale a justice may have for upbraiding a youth or using the court process in a way that risks alienating an already-disadvantaged and alienated youth, this would not appear to be a sound use of discretion. We believe that judges should be encouraged to remain mindful of the potential for their conduct to have negative consequences for that youth, their peers, their family and their community. While the consequences a justice must impose may sometimes have to be harsh, the route to them never should be. We commend to the chief justices what we have said about the potential to make the court process a positive contributor to reduced youth violence.

The third issue is specialization. We believe that, to the greatest extent feasible, the judges who deal with youth matters should specialize in this work. We also see real benefits if those specialist judges are also involved in child protection cases, given the high degree of overlap of both participants and issues. We have also noted that judges who deal with family cases as well as youth matters have said that this improves their capacity to appreciate the circumstances of the youth coming before them.

We recognize that combining youth justice work with family or child protection matters may not be possible in those parts of the province that have a unified family court, given the choices made about what jurisdiction to vest in those courts. Ontario's unified family courts have jurisdiction over all family law matters. They also deal with child welfare matters, but not youth criminal justice cases. This is a policy choice resulting from the negotiations when the federal government expanded the unified family court system, and could be changed if the governments and the courts were willing to do so. We think that the Province and the federal government should consider again whether to give those courts the young offender work. Elsewhere in the province, we encourage this combination of work wherever logistically possible.

While we see specialization, where possible, coexisting with and sometimes being enhanced by combining youth justice work with family or child protection matters, we do have concerns about holding youth court in adult-court buildings, when all of the personnel in the building including the youth court judges rotate through all the courts. Given the predominance of adult-court matters, the resulting style of justice can all too easily coalesce into adult-court values and processes. In high-volume courthouses, where most cases are disposed of by guilty plea, youth cases can be subject to the same plea-bargaining pressures (high volume and limited resources on both sides) as adult cases.

As a result, the principles of the *Youth Criminal Justice Act* can be forgotten. Defence efforts can reflexively focus on quickly negotiating the most lenient result for the young person rather than on, as the Act requires, taking "reasonable steps to prevent youth crime by addressing its underlying causes" (preamble). Judges come from a milieu where they find themselves allowing joint submissions in order to relieve the case backlog pressures, even though the goals of the court require much more in terms of analyzing the causes of behaviour and accessing community-based services and resources. Even dedicated, youth-specialist Crown attorneys cannot ensure an appropriate result on sentence in the atmosphere of an adult-court culture and enormous backlog pressures. None of this is in the interests of youth or those concerned about their future. While a high-volume, fast-resolution model is less than ideal for adults, its impact on youth is more severe given the early effect it can have on their life chances.

The fourth issue we want to raise applies not only to youth justice, but also extends to community justice. Throughout our short tenure on this review, we had far more good ideas presented to us than we could consider fully. For many of these, we are relying on the specialized planning exercise called for in Chapter 10 to ensure that the government has the widest array of options and best advice possible.

But because it could get lost in the array of better-known programs, we wish to comment briefly on the concept of a community court. This concept is in place in some parts of the United States and Australia, has been expanded to 10 sites in Britain and is close to coming to fruition in British Columbia.

While each variation has its own features, the core concept is that a court would sit in a community centre, where it would be anchored in a full spectrum of community resources. It would work closely with a community advisory council. As is the case with the mental health courts and some other existing specialized courts in Ontario, its role would be to enforce the use of community programs and alternatives, working with the community and using community resources to address the underlying problems of those brought before it. As described in an article about the proposed court in Vancouver's downtown eastside:

> Community courts take a problem-solving approach to offenders, using a range of health and social services like housing, mental health, drug treatment, welfare and job training (Bermingham, 2007).

That article went on to quote the judge setting up the Vancouver court as follows:

> The community court wants to solve the problem that leads … to the crime….

We think that this concept is worthy of careful consideration. Importantly, such a court could be piloted in one or more of the community hubs we propose in Pillar 3. This would directly connect the court to the community and its services and, indeed, could serve as a place of specialized learning about how courts can build on community strengths, lessons that could then be disseminated more widely among other judges and Crowns.

(ix) Probation and Corrections

We did not hear a great deal about the conditions within youth custodial facilities. As discussed in Chapter 2, we were deeply impressed by the maturity and insights of the detained youth we met and by the impressive and progressive programs in place to help such youth. The commitment by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services to ending the use of adult correctional facilities for youth custody is a positive one and is to be commended.

There remain four areas for attention. First, the strategic — think roots — analysis we outlined for the rest of the justice system needs to apply here as well. The ministry needs to be vigilant to ensure that systemic racism does not influence either the treatment of, or decisions made about, incarcerated youth. And, for the reasons we discussed, civility needs to be insisted on at all times.

Second, the ministry needs to find ways to prevent a period of incarceration becoming a "gang-entry" program. We were advised that many youth, while in custody, develop relationships with gang members that lead to gang affiliation. They then take that association with them when they return home. In some instances where youth are incarcerated with youth from other cities, this transition jumps municipal lines and brings a new and more dangerous gang culture to areas that did not have that problem before. The ministry needs to be sensitive to this issue and should implement a strategy to prevent it from occurring.

Third, the ministry needs to pay careful attention to the critical role of probation officers. They make important decisions about extra-judicial approaches to youth, prepare pre-sentence reports that carry great weight with judges, and supervise youth on release. They, in particular, have to be trained and supported to understand the full context of the youth they deal with, including the kinds of family issues discussed above.

Finally, more needs to be done to assist youth with their transition back into the community. Youth who are released from custody with no family and no place to live are highly likely to go back to their former associates for companionship or just to survive on the streets. Youth who have no place to go other than a place that was already isolating and dysfunctional for them are similarly likely to fall on their old ways. This is all the more likely given that they now face the barriers of a criminal record, which includes jail time.

We understand that the ministry does do reintegration planning for youth, and that probation officers work with youth during the community supervision phase of their sentence to help with this goal. But there is more work to be done in promoting increased service coordination between program sectors to enhance successful outcomes for youth leaving custody. The implementation of a transitional support-worker model is such an example.

Transitional workers would work with youth from the initial court process through to release into the community, providing in-depth support and counselling, as well as mentorship. Additionally, these workers would assist in the development of a reintegration plan, working closely with the probation case manager to provide necessary community referrals, such as culturally appropriate programming, linkages to mental health, schooling, economic opportunity initiatives and mentoring, among others. Once again, youth workers could play a key role in making connections to and among these supports, and our proposed community hubs could both facilitate and normalize their use.

The Second Pillar:
Towards a Youth Policy Framework

Introduction

At many points throughout our work, we were struck by the lack of policy coordination across the myriad of programs dealing with Ontario's youth. This is as true within the provincial government itself as it is among the three orders of government, the many other funders of youth services and the thousands of youth-serving agencies. Without policy coordination and coherence, duplication occurs, gaps exist, funding does not flow to evidence-based priorities, and both service providers and their clients are often baffled by what services are and are not available at any given place or time, and by the differences in what the available ones appear to be trying to achieve.

In a recent study of youth policy frameworks, *Youth Policy: What Works and What Doesn't*, United Way Toronto reached a similar conclusion, stating:

> …we also found system-wide problems, primarily the growth of an increasingly complex and fragmented youth sector characterized by incoherence in services, policies and funding sources…[T]he overall public policy response to youth issues has developed in a piecemeal fashion, with various supports and services set up in isolation from each other by different governments, agencies and departments. At a time when youth face big challenges, the programs and supports to help young people are not close to hand and easy to access (United Way Toronto, 2008: 5).

We are aware that individual units within the various involved governments and many service providers have worked hard to develop their own youth strategies, many of which serve a useful purpose. However, these strategies exist in silos and rarely address the broad developmental needs of youth. And yet, as the United Way study shows, other jurisdictions, including Quebec and British Columbia, have achieved positive results in moving to adopt broad coordinated policies for youth.

Based on our discussions, we believe that one of the best ways to provide policy coherence in an area where there are so many different actors is through an overall youth policy framework. A policy framework is not a substitute for the effective governance structure we recommend in Pillar 4. It can, however, play two important supporting roles.

First, a policy framework provides transparency as to the goals sought to be achieved through a new governance structure, and thus helps build support for and cooperation with it. And second, it not only establishes a "whole of government" approach to youth issues, but as well offers persuasive guidance for other orders of government, foundations and many service providers that operate outside a formal governance structure. It does so by providing a basis for determining which programs should be seen as core and mandatory and which should be seen as discretionary and by providing a common point of reference for the many public bodies and community agencies, allowing them to see where their existing or proposed programs fit or do not fit into a comprehensive strategy.

The policy framework we see as the most promising would be based on the early childhood development model used in Ontario and elsewhere. That model, which has served to inspire and coordinate actions for children up to age six by governments and communities alike, is based on the developmental stages of children. It provides an evidence-based framework on which governments and other service providers can situate their programs, and to which they can refer in setting their priorities. While it took a long time to develop, it enjoys wide acceptance in the field today.

Given the positive impacts of the early childhood framework, we are concerned that Ontario does not have, and does not appear to be working towards, anything similar for children over six years of age. To us, it is clear that Ontario's work to address the roots of violence involving youth, and indeed all of its work with youth, needs to take place within a widely accessible evidence-based policy framework.

We have in mind something well beyond a policy framework that simply sets out aspirations for youth. We believe that the Province urgently needs a framework that is informed by research about the developmental and transitional stages of childhood and that focuses on desired outcomes. It would not be about who does what nor about control, but would set out an evidence-based, outcomes-focused framework to serve as a guide for program development and priority-setting by communities, agencies and the various orders of government.

We see such a framework as having three main components: a vision, a set of shared principles and an articulation of specific outcome goals, accompanied by targets and timelines to achieve them. Time did not permit us to design a youth policy framework, nor would it have been appropriate to do so without a significant degree of consultation with youth, service providers, funders, policy-makers and the public at large. We believe that the Province must undertake the research and consultations necessary to develop such a framework, a task we see as achievable by next summer. Nonetheless, to help readers understand what we believe such a framework might look like, we offer below our initial thoughts on each component.

1. A Vision

We propose a vision that would, of course, value youth as critically important for the ongoing strength of this province and recognize that their future is our future. It would be premised on ongoing generational renewal, and on a shared understanding that all youth should be safe, valued and trusted; have the opportunity to grow, learn, play and achieve their dreams in healthy, inclusive and seamlessly supportive neighbourhoods; be treated equitably according to their individual circumstances; be educated and nurtured; be mentored and supported in developing a secure sense of belonging; and also be listened to and involved and, as they grow older, given real responsibility, all so that they may reach their full potential and help the rest of us reach ours.

2. Shared Principles

The principles we propose would include respecting youth by involving them in determining and addressing their needs; recognizing racial, gender and other differences among youth; organizing programs and interventions around the strengths of each youth and the circumstances in which they live; reflecting the realities of the developmental and transitional stages youth pass through; and ensuring that programs and services are increasingly based on proven best practices, make appropriate connections among youth, their families, schools and communities, and are truly accessible.

a) Respecting Youth Involvement

We were struck throughout our work by the keen insights and valuable perspectives of the youth we met. Especially among those youth who do not fit the stereotype of the "young achievers," but even among those who do, there is nonetheless a strong sense that their insights and views are not sought and, when presented, are undervalued. In our view, this is a serious mistake.

In many instances, youth have the best sense of the issues they face, and what will work to address those issues. They often have a remarkably subtle sense of how our society affects and is perceived by youth, and of the practicalities of supporting and nurturing youth in a meaningful and sustainable way. To fail to seek and consider these perspectives, or to fail to foster and build on the strengths of youth-led organizations, is to exclude a highly relevant source of expertise. It is also to risk wasted investments as well-intentioned programs founder on the lack of appreciation for the current circumstances, needs, priorities and ideas of youth.

b) Recognizing Differences

There are enormous differences among youth, both in their personal characteristics and in the environments in which they grow and live. A partial list of differences would include gender, race, sexual orientation, ability, mental and physical health, as well as their family or other living situations, their communities, their values, interests and friends, their socio-economic circumstances, their experiences in the educational system and sometimes their own family responsibilities.

Programs for youth that ignore or pay only passing attention to these differences cannot hope to succeed. These differences are often central to understanding the whole situation a youth may be facing. They are also central to selecting the services and programs that will be of the most benefit, and then integrating them effectively into the family, school and community settings in which youth are spending the vast majority of their time.

c) Organizing Services Around Each Youth

It is necessary but not sufficient to recognize the many differences between and among youth and to give these differences practical significance by respecting them in providing programs and services of general application. In addition, and vitally, service providers must look to those differences to understand the particular strengths within and available to the individual youth so that the focus can be on identifying, supporting and building on the strengths of youth rather than focusing on problems they may present.

Only once a youth's own strengths, and those within his or her family, school or community, are understood, is it possible to effectively determine what services each youth needs and can benefit from. Service providers can then move towards the goal of seeking to find and coordinate those services or supports for the youth, rather than starting from predefined programs and trying to find one or more into which the youth can be made to fit.

d) Understanding and Respecting Developmental and Transitional Stages

From age six on, as well as in the earlier years covered by the early childhood development strategy, youth are going through some highly significant developmental and transitional stages. Understanding these stages helps those working with youth to appreciate what is "normal" at each developmental stage, what behaviour should be let alone and what calls for intervention. This understanding is also key to determining which interventions will work most effectively, since developmental stages tell us the periods of time when interventions will work, and the nature of the interventions that work best at each stage.

As well, youth go through several key transitions as they grow up. These include the move to full-time schooling, the transition from primary to middle and then to high school, and the end of their high school years. Each of these transitional stages, as well as the developmental stages, needs to be taken into account in dealing with youth, as they also profoundly affect how behaviour should be seen and responded to.

To a certain extent, just increasing the awareness of these realities among those dealing with youth will improve services and interactions because that awareness will encourage questioning and reflection about what is going on in a youth's life at the time an intervention is being considered. However, to make real progress in this area, the government needs to marshal the available evidence about each developmental and transitional stage and its implications, and make that information available in an accessible form to those dealing with youth. The government also needs to commission and support additional research in these areas in order to support the development of further evidence-based approaches in the field.

e) Best Practices

It is important that any statement of principles for dealing with youth contain core standards for service providers. In our view, these can be quite simply stated and, indeed, have been by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services in the context of child and youth mental health. Such services and supports, the ministry says, should be: youth and family-centred; community-driven; accessible; coordinated and collaborative; evidence-based and accountable. To these principles we would simply add one more: youth should be meaningfully involved in the governance structures of bodies serving them to the greatest extent possible (Ministry of Children and Youth Services, 2006: ii).

3. An Outcomes Focus

Youth vary in their personal characteristics and in the family and community contexts in which they are growing. Ontario's youth policy framework should accordingly not attempt to prescribe the specific means to help youth develop, but rather should address the desired outcomes for them.

This reflects the reality that programs must be flexible to meet the individualized needs of youth or defined groups of youth, and also to permit innovation so that best practices can continue to be created. Indeed, one of the longer-term benefits of an outcomes approach is that once there is agreement on the desired outcomes, programs need not adhere to a centrally developed, one-size-fits-all model, but rather can be developed in light of local needs and strengths. These local innovations can then be evaluated in terms of their ability to achieve the desired outcomes. This not only allows customization for local circumstances, but also leads to continuous improvement through an ever-evolving set of evidence-based best practices.

To be meaningful, outcomes must be accompanied by a commitment to measured and relentless progress towards them (published indicators), along with clear timelines and specific accountabilities for meeting those indicators. We will address targeting, measurement and accountability in more detail in Chapter 10. For now, we just want to note that, to be useful in this context, the outcomes and the indicators set for measuring progress towards them should meet three conditions.

First, they should be based on minimum acceptable levels of progress: they should be floors, rather than averages. Averages hide a myriad of policy and program sins; if the best-off improve their outcomes, the average can go up even if the worst-off are static or even losing ground. More significantly, in the world of addressing the immediate risk factors for violence, it is those who are doing the least well whom we must identify and on whom we must concentrate. We cannot do this if we are blinded by averages.

We accordingly strongly endorse the "floor targets approach," in which we as a society commit to no individual, school or community doing less well than the applicable minimum standard. When we measure outcomes and indicators against this kind of standard, we immediately see where extra help must go, whether on an individual or school or service provider basis.

Second, the indicators should measure and track racial and other differences so that we can ensure that all members of our society receive the help they need to fulfil their potential. As one senior Ontario official put it, it is "madness" not to have this information.

And third, the outcomes should, whenever the context makes it possible, include a commitment to reducing the gap between the most successful and the least; we will not accomplish as much as we need to if we raise the bottom while the top is rising even faster. We will not nurture a sense of optimism, hope and belonging by raising outcomes for youth who see themselves still falling behind the rest of society.

With these important caveats as to the necessity and methodology of measuring progress towards agreed-upon outcomes, we put forward here examples of the key areas in which we feel outcome commitments are needed. In the time available to us, we could not develop the actual outcomes or targets; it will be for the government, in a collaborative way, to establish current baselines, along with long-term outcome goals and annual targets to measure movement towards them. These must be public, and progress towards them must be regularly reported in a clear and transparent way.

With that said, and being comfortable from our discussions in England and Ontario that measurable outcomes and targets are possible for each of them, we offer the following examples of areas in which outcomes should be defined within Ontario's youth policy framework:

- Reducing the number of youth living in households that fall below the poverty line
- Reducing the number of youth living in substandard housing
- Reducing the number of youth living in neighbourhoods with high concentrations of poverty
- Increasing the number of youth with at least one positive adult influencer

- Improving defined educational outcomes for youth, including outcomes within training and job-readiness programs
- Increasing the readiness of youth for employment opportunities and reducing youth unemployment
- Reducing negative police interactions with youth
- Reducing youth incarceration rates
- Reducing youth victimization
- Reducing discrimination against youth
- Inproving health standards for youth (physical and mental health, substance abuse)
- Enhancing levels of civic engagement by youth, including through participation in the governance of youth-serving organizations and in providing services to youth through youth-led organizations
- Increasing the proportion of services for youth delivered through linked or otherwise coordinated service delivery systems
- Increasing the proportion of services that provide an integrated approach to youth, families, schools and communities.

Conclusion

Building on the early childhood development framework, which has anchored programming for children up to age six, this pillar will provide an evidence-based framework to guide the policy and program decisions of all levels of government, the community and agencies. It will foster strategic decision-making and policy coherence across the numerous sectors concerned about the roots of violence involving youth.

The Third Pillar:
Building Strong Communities to Address the Roots of Violence Involving Youth

Introduction

In Section 1 of this chapter, we outlined the first of our four foundational pillars: a social opportunity and anti-racism strategy to address many of the roots of violence involving youth. That pillar focuses on improving the province's social context through action on issues such as poverty, racism, education, family supports, mental health and youth justice. It also addresses ways to improve services and facilities for the disadvantaged, wherever they live, and to foster social and economic integration to reduce concentrations of disadvantage.

But more is required if we are to address some of the most tenacious roots of violence involving youth, roots that grow from the lack of community cohesion and the fragmentation of programs and services that exist in many disadvantaged neighbourhoods. As set out in Chapter 5, areas of concentrated economic disadvantage all too easily nurture those roots. As a result, if the circumstances that these concentrations create are not addressed, they will keep producing new generations of youth with the immediate risk factors for violence. The continuing violence and fear of violence that will result will have the obvious and tragic consequence of rendering those neighbourhoods ever more fragmented and isolated, and thereby will perpetuate and deepen their disadvantaged condition, leading to yet more violence and possibly an entrenched underclass.

A key way to break that downward cycle and at the same time support the initiatives set out in Pillar 1 is by strengthening these communities. Indeed, if we fail to do so, much of the investment in more general reforms will fail to achieve its goals in the very neighbourhoods where reform is most needed. Positive change will be much more difficult to achieve because we will have missed the opportunity to create positive synergies around those investments, to improve their targeting on the greatest local needs and to ensure that local strengths are supported and built upon. And we will also have missed the opportunity to help break concentrations of disadvantage by making these communities more attractive places to live so that they can retain their stronger members and perhaps also begin to attract others who have a choice about where they live.

That is why we determined that it was essential that our advice to the Premier include a pillar devoted entirely to building strong communities. We believe that the best way to build strong communities is to adopt a comprehensive and sustained approach to advancing community cohesion by providing consistent supports and by increasing local engagement and control over priority-setting and service delivery. As we will see in the discussion of Pillar 4, a further benefit of this is that it supports a new integrated governance model, which will effectively drive forward relentless progress on reducing the roots of violence because it is able to increasingly rely on communities to determine how best to achieve that goal.

Overview, Principles and the Provincial Interest

1. Principles and Overview

Our third pillar looks at how to support residents of communities to come together to create local networks and organizations that allow them to identify challenges, opportunities and solutions and in which community cohesion is enhanced in the process.

Given our mandate, the focus of our analysis and proposals is on the most disadvantaged communities. We nonetheless note that the goal of strengthening communities, listening to them and devolving responsibilities to them is relevant in many other communities across the province. In no way do we want to be seen as suggesting that efforts in this direction should be restricted to the most disadvantaged communities. Our mandate leads us to focus on them, but we would, of course, have no difficulty with the government adopting this approach more widely. We do, though, propose that priority for implementation and funding be given to those communities where we must ensure a major turnaround as soon as possible to address the ways they are generating the immediate risk factors for violence involving youth.

Our advice centres on how the Province can help the most disadvantaged communities come together in ways that support and enhance their existing and evolving strengths so that they can become cohesive and vibrant places to live. We base that advice on the following premises:

- Communities are composed of families, and strong communities are built on, and reinforce, strong families.
- Families have many forms, and strengthening families does not mean favouring one form over another.
- Only by ensuring that supports are available to individuals and families can we strengthen the disadvantaged communities, since many of their residents live

there precisely because they need services and assistance to cope with the pressures of life.

- Services that communities need to become strong, and the staff providing those services, must be placed on a stable funding foundation to ensure continuity and access for residents.
- Services and programs must be clustered not only to make access easier for people whose time may be at a premium, but as well to allow the service providers to more easily and naturally understand the needs of individuals within their family and community contexts.
- Community members need space to come together to build cohesion, identify local needs and strategies to address them, operate their own programs, or just to gather for social purposes. Youth share these needs, and in particular need neutral and safe places in which to gather, play, create and develop a sense of security and identity within their community.
- In disadvantaged neighbourhoods, there is a core need for coordination among the local service providers, for grassroots participation in planning and programming community hubs, and for youth-led organizations to help reach the most disadvantaged youth.

Based on our research and discussions, we identified four linked ways in which these principles can be used to build cohesive and strong communities:

1. Creating community hubs, wherever possible anchored in school facilities, not only to provide programs and services, but just as importantly to provide space and to facilitate connections so that communities can coalesce to play increasingly larger roles in setting priorities, developing policies and providing activities and services for their residents
2. Actively assisting communities to come together to form stronger networks of mutual support and involvement
3. Providing streamlined and stable funding mechanisms to maximize the responsiveness, capacity and stability of the many agencies on which governments now rely to deliver many of the core services that are necessary to address the roots of violence involving youth

4. In disadvantaged neighbourhoods, ensuring that, in addition to the service-providing bodies, there is a) at least one general-purpose, youth-led organization addressing the roots of violence involving youth based on local priorities, b) a team of individuals who work to coordinate services and improve access to them, and c) funding made available to support resident engagement and community participation in planning and programming the community hubs referred to above.

2. Declaring a Provincial Interest in Community Building

The initiatives we outline in this pillar deal with strengthening Ontario's most disadvantaged communities. For that particular purpose and in these specific communities, we believe that the Province must fund or ensure the funding of the required structural initiatives. We recognize that for other purposes and in other contexts there could be significant jurisdictional issues involved in determining who should support these initiatives. We make no comment on how in those contexts the responsibility should be determined. In the only context we were asked to address, the roots of violence involving youth, there is a super-ordinate provincial interest that calls out for the Province to ensure that these initiatives proceed.

For the reasons discussed in Chapter 5 and noted in the introduction to this pillar, there is a significant and ongoing link between disadvantaged neighbourhoods and the roots of violence involving youth. The Province's financial responsibility to strengthen those communities to address this situation arises for several reasons.

First, while violence often takes place near its roots, that is not always the case. Large urban centres often receive troubled youth from elsewhere. And we were told by the police that increased enforcement in places like Toronto drives gang members to neighbouring areas, which are unprepared to deal with them. Particularly for the kind of violence we outlined in Chapter 5, which often results from alienated and disengaged youth walking around with guns, the risk clearly crosses neighbourhood or other jurisdictional lines.

The second basis for provincial responsibility lies in the need to address the roots everywhere they arise, including where local financial capacity may not be sufficient to deal with the pressing and urgent need to address these roots.

Third, in our view, the Province has all the powers needed to address the roots of violence involving youth, and all Ontario residents should be able to look to the Province for progress on providing a safe place to live by exercising these powers.

These reasons give the Province a clear and direct interest in developing vibrant, active and cohesive communities where disadvantage now fosters violence, and providing in an efficient way the supports and services it already funds in these neighbourhoods. But this is by no means to say that the Province must assume all the costs of services in disadvantaged communities.

The matters addressed in this pillar are matters of core social infrastructure, not services. They are the building blocks for the strong communities needed to address the roots of violence involving youth, and so stand in a category of their own. While the Province should strengthen the services it provides in these communities, we are not saying that it should assume service costs of other jurisdictions. And, to repeat, we are not saying that the Province's financial responsibilities in even these limited activities are universal; they fall where there are concentrations of disadvantage in which the roots of violence can grow.

Our belief that the Province should fund the social infrastructure we propose for disadvantaged communities does not absolve the other orders of government of their responsibilities for services. There is an obvious need for the federal government to recognize the impact of its own cutbacks and to begin to invest seriously in the health of disadvantaged communities. The Province should continue to be vocal in this regard and to press for enhanced federal funding. The Province should also take every opportunity to nurture and build on the work municipal governments are doing in these neighbourhoods.

In the balance of our discussion of Pillar 3, we outline in greater detail our advice on each element of the proposed social infrastructure. While we address each element separately, they constitute an integrated approach, which would be significantly weakened if any one of them were missing.

The Four Elements of Pillar 3

1. Community Hubs

a) Hubs Defined

We must first be clear about what we mean by hubs, as the term is in wide use without a widely understood definition. To some, it means a place where there is space for residents to meet and fulfil basic social needs, such as recreation, learning or discussion. For others, it means a place where service providers, such as doctors, mental health workers, employment counsellors and many others, are clustered. For yet others, it means places where private sector businesses and services can be found, very much like some shopping malls or the main streets in some cities, towns and urban neighbourhoods.

Our focus is on the first two definitions. For us, community hubs are places that facilitate access to public services and programs and are designed and have the resources to promote interaction among residents. To the extent that such hubs can be close to or attract private sector activities, these purposes can be further advanced, but striving for such proximity should not take the place of urgent and immediate progress on developing places that meet the first two definitions.

While the two definitions of hubs that we have adopted reinforce each other, they are distinct, and we must be careful to achieve both. Indeed, given the focus that services often receive, it is particularly important to remember the need to create space where community and youth activities can be seeded and grow, and not just focus on providing space to cluster service providers, formal programs and established activities.

For ease of exposition, we discuss these two definitions separately, but we believe that, to the greatest extent possible, one hub should serve both purposes. Having explored the two definitions, we then go on to outline why schools often make ideal hubs under both definitions, and then to propose a mechanism to turn that long-desired goal into reality.

i) Clustering

As a prelude to discussing service clusters as hubs, we should stress that we recognize that clustering services will need to be done on an incremental basis. It should be a fundamental consideration when new services are brought to a community or as leases for existing ones come due, but we do not wish to be taken as proposing that existing services be uprooted at great cost to provide a hub.

That said, there are numerous benefits to clustering services, starting with the reality that one of the significant barriers to services being used is the difficulty of getting to them. When services are scattered and transit options few, people with limited resources, many needs and little time are actively discouraged from accessing them, whether for themselves or their families. Complexity of access blocks use. Even improved coordination of services through case managers, lead agencies or "navigators" to guide people through the services maze will not overcome that reality. The consequence is that many who need them the most, including children and youth, do not get to use even those programs and services that have the capacity to help them.

Moreover, when services and activities are scattered and hard to get to, not only do people use them less, but those who do use the services spend scarce and valuable time getting to and from them. As an obvious consequence, they have less time or energy to interact with their family or their neighbours. Indeed, family members and neighbours may also be engaged in the time-consuming process of getting to services or activities, and so also have less time and energy for engagement.

By contrast, once there is clustering, these barriers and negative consequences are addressed to a significant degree, and numerous other benefits ensue. To begin with, when they are clustered, the agencies providing services and programs can more easily understand the multiple needs of their clients and appreciate their family and community dynamics. To use the language of this domain, services can be more easily delivered in a "wraparound" way for each individual. As well, services for one family member can more easily be linked to services for other family members so that the "think family" approach we noted in Pillar 1 can be taken. It is easier to think family if the family is there.

Additionally, working in a cluster permits staff and volunteers providing these services to get to know each other. This provides a deeper understanding of the community and social contexts for many of the issues being addressed and can also facilitate mutual support for this often-difficult and stressful work. In these and other ways, clustering can encourage collaboration among services, which together with the stable funding we discuss below allows them to serve their clients more efficiently. There may also be other benefits, such as the capacity to share some common infrastructure.

From the perspective of the family, clustering supports family cohesiveness by allowing family members with different needs to get services or attend activities at nearby locations rather than having to head off in different directions to get to them. It also makes it easier to provide supports, such as interpretation or child care, and allows parents to more easily attend with their children, and therefore obtain a better understanding of the services their children are receiving.

At the same time, the simple fact of clustering exposes residents to the range of services available in their community. Seeing the services on the ground is a much better way to appreciate their nature and availability than reading a pamphlet or viewing a public service announcement. It also allows people to more casually explore what the services are about and to ease their way into accessing them.

From a safety standpoint, when many individuals converge to access services, these clusters can create zones of safety based on the well-known principle that an active, populated area is generally much safer than an isolated and empty one. This normalization and intensification of the public presence in public spaces takes back the streets and reduces both the need and the incentive we identified in Chapter 5 for youth to interact with gangs. By making public spaces safer, this then encourages more public use and more interaction. Clusters also encourage transportation planning to take the hub into account, and further improve access to it and the use of its services.

Finally, and of critical importance to our goal of stronger communities, the reality is that individuals and families will not only have easier and more convenient access to services, but the clustering will also create natural opportunities to gather: places where they can meet casually and informally, get to know each other and become engaged in the life of their community. Indeed, one of the best ways to help communities come together is to create natural patterns of interaction, where before there had been isolation. And, because the clustering saves the large amount of time otherwise spent in travelling to services, or overcomes the discouragement to even seek them out, this potential is reinforced.

ii) Community Space

While service clusters create natural places of convergence and conversation, the potential for this to lead to community cohesion can only be realized if there is space for unhurried conversations, regular discussions, forums and more casual gatherings to explore the design and delivery of community-generated policy proposals, activities and programs. This second sense of a hub is vital to our purpose and cannot be neglected when hubs are designed and when the space within them is allocated.

The lack of this kind of space was one of the most frequent concerns we heard. We cannot expect community residents to come together to play a role in the priorization, design and delivery of services if there is no place for them to get to know each other and to work together to do so. The provision of spaces for casual interactions and drop-ins, and also easy access to space to use when communities have programs to deliver themselves, will provide the foundation for cohesion.

We note in this connection that the need for space is particularly great for youth and youth-led organizations. As discussed in Chapter 4, these groups not only generally lack the resources to rent space, but also are often discriminated against when they seek it. Securing space for youth in these hubs so that they have the chance to coalesce and develop their role within the community must accordingly be one of the core public purposes for investing in community space.

For both youth and other grassroots organizations, it is essential to do more than just create the space. Even where space may be available, many youth-led and other grassroots organizations, and especially those trying to get them started, lack the funds to pay permit fees or rent. Existing service providers can seek and generally obtain funding to pay, or at least contribute to, rent for the premises they use. But the kind of general public space we envisage has no natural tenant and generally no source of funding. It is therefore vital that provincial funding for hubs ensures that space is truly available for community and youth meetings and activities.

As well, assuming that space is available for youth and community purposes, it is important to ensure that the best-organized and most-established groups within a community, or groups from outside the community, do not monopolize it and the programs to be delivered in it. It follows from this that funds must be available to support communities to come together for the specific purpose of making collective decisions about the use of this space and the activities to be offered in it in light of the community's own needs and priorities. We pursue this issue later in this pillar.

b) Schools as Hubs

In this section we outline the many reasons why we believe that schools are very often the most natural and best hubs. We stress, though, that the concept of a hub is independently important and needs to be pursued whether or not it makes sense in a particular context to use a school for that purpose. As well, we note that the provincial funding role we identify for schools as hubs in disadvantaged neighbourhoods applies equally when hubs are located in other facilities. And we note that in some high-density areas local planning will be required to determine which of the local schools should anchor school-based or nearby services hubs.

In supporting the schools-as-hubs concept strongly as we do, we build on the work of many others whose efforts to advance this concept we acknowledge and endorse. In addition to the persuasive work of many at the grassroots level, major published reports calling for this go back at least to the Hall-Dennis Report of 1968 and include the 2002 Education Equality Task Force report (the Rozanski report). To cite the former:

> School buildings are expensive resources of major importance, and the public has the right to enjoy their widest possible use. Many communities have already demonstrated the feasibility of extending the use of these facilities, and the program now envisaged is one in which the library resource center, the swimming pool, the gymnasia and the classrooms can all be used as part of a regular community program (Ontario Department of Education, 1968).

We fully agree and would only add that the facilities that could be used for community purposes extend outside the structures to include the playgrounds and sports fields.

While there is almost overwhelming support for using schools as hubs, the concept remains far from being realized in this province. There is a shortage of clear proposals about how that space should be made available, paid for and managed on the scale we believe is necessary. We hope to advance the concept of schools as hubs in part by being very specific not only about the idea, but about how it can be made a reality. Before providing these specifics, we will first outline the concept as we envisage it.

There are two core aspects to the concept of schools as hubs. The first and predominant one is the use of existing school buildings for this purpose. The second is the location of services and programs as close as possible to schools. Both are necessary given that, even if fully available for use as hubs after teaching hours, schools will not have all the required space and that many services need to operate during teaching hours. Community health centres, community recreation centres and public libraries come to mind; both their space needs and their hours of operation probably preclude them from being based in most existing schools, although facilitating this could and should be designed into many new ones.

We note in this connection that in Pillar 1, we called for an immediate investment in community recreation and arts facilities in the disadvantaged neighbourhoods that lack them. We have not included that and similar proposals as part of Pillar 3, but want to stress the value of locating these new facilities in school premises whenever possible.

Where location within or on the grounds of, or adjacent to, a school is not feasible, services should be located as close to the school hub and each other as possible. Where that cannot be done, satellite offices or even just information and outreach offices should be located in the school hubs to operate as seamlessly as possible in conjunction with the other after-hours programs or services being offered there. And providing free and scheduled transportation services between the school hub and services located elsewhere should also be considered.

As a general rule, however, and especially with a view to services, programs and gathering places for youth, we believe that schools are the much preferred hub. Elementary schools are in close reach of large numbers of community residents and, by definition, are places where youth spend large parts of each day. High schools, while not as plentiful, are also logical hubs for the communities near them. When schools are used as hubs, parents who may already be dropping off or picking up their children have easy access to services for both themselves and their children without extra transit time. With the coming of full-day junior and senior kindergarten, and with what we hope will be acceptance of our advice that schools be open for youth and full of positive activities until at least 6 p.m. every day and on weekends, the potential synergies are obvious.

We accept that schools are not always positive places for all youth at present, and that some may not be attracted to them after hours as places for programs and activities. We believe, however, that the right programming will serve as a magnet for many of these youth, removing any deterrence that the location in or near a school may have. Indeed, we believe that the right programming, the association with positive activities and more-engaged youth in the schools after hours, and potentially informal contacts there with teachers and administrators may well change the attitude of some of these youth to schools themselves.

In a similar vein, there will be parents whose own school years were not positive, or who for reasons of culture or language are reluctant to approach the school during the teaching day. Turning the schools into a place of positive engagement and useful services may well overcome these barriers, increasing the involvement of these parents with the life of the school and the life of their child within it. Both of these will serve to increase the child's attachment to the school and, as the Rozanski report noted:

> ... when community groups, parents and others visit the school to participate in community activities and use the school's facilities, they develop a sense of interest and ownership in local education. More public interest in and ownership of educational issues can only strengthen our education system (Rozanski, 2007: 17).

The potential benefits of making schools fully accessible to their communities are limitless. The potential uses and applications are as wide as the imagination. A school in Ontario's Lambton County includes a dental clinic and visits from a midwife as well as family early intervention and infant development programs. One in Milton offers adult literacy and a fresh food box program along with space for a homework program and the local children's aid.

Quebec's school-based Community Learning Centres (CLCs) feature a paid coordinator who works over a three-year period to mobilize a community, create a community advisory council and plan programs and then an evaluation. Manitoba is piloting a similar community organizing approach. Interestingly, Quebec's 22 CLCs have video-conferencing facilities, which have allowed collaborative programming across the province and have brought new learning opportunities to remote communities.

Saskatchewan's Schools PLUS program is provincewide and provides integrated supports for children, youth and families to strengthen education success and well-being. It aims to bring together local health authorities, employment services, corrections, law enforcement, higher education facilities, Aboriginal organizations, early childhood teams and recreation groups to make services more accessible and support youth.

Ontario has made some moves in the direction of using schools as delivery points for services. More than 300 Ontario Early Years Centres are located in schools. So too are many of the province's Best Start hubs, which integrate public health, education, children's aid, programs for children from 0 to 6, and municipal and other services. Parenting and Family Literacy Centres are also located in schools.

Whether to make services accessible or to provide space for programs and community initiatives, using schools as hubs makes enormous financial sense. In many instances, the physical space in schools is used for teaching purposes only about a quarter of the available time assuming a 7 a.m.-10 p.m. year-round capacity. Others who have considered the potential to use the space for even longer hours have concluded that the annual use of school space is only about 15 per cent.

This space has already been paid for by the public. It is a veritable treasure of locally accessible space; not just space for meetings and other uses of classrooms, but as well frequently containing gyms, auditoria, computer labs, libraries, child care centres and other resources of huge value to disadvantaged and under-serviced communities.

To have well-located physical plants and the resources they contain used for only a fraction of the year is not acceptable. Schools represent massive public investments, and they should be available to their communities when not in use for teaching and other educational endeavours.

The Province seems to have accepted this principle, at least to a degree. It took an initial small step in this direction in 2004 when a modest amount of funding was made available to let some schools stay open longer, largely by allowing them to reduce the fees charged for using the facilities. We applauded this and suggested a significant expansion in an update letter we wrote to the Premier in January 2008, and were pleased to see an expansion of that program in March. Of note in that expansion was the future inclusion of some targeting in disadvantaged areas and the inclusion of some outreach capacity to encourage more groups to take advantage of the space.

There remain, however, serious problems with the Province's approach to this issue. We have identified six:

- The provision of access to school facilities is not mandatory, but is for the school boards to determine.
- Most potential users are still required to pay fees for this public space.

- The application process varies from school to school and favours groups with the time and resources to work through a complex application process.
- There is no consistent set of priorities for the use of this space, with a pattern of prior use often trumping current needs. Each principal is free to promote or impede access and to encourage whatever purposes interest them the most.
- There is little or no new funding to provide programming in the space that is made available.
- There is little to no new funding to help communities come together to determine and voice their priorities for the use of the space.

In the result, while we recognize the steps taken in the direction of making schools hubs, we believe that much more needs to be done. At least in disadvantaged areas, we think that making schools available as hubs wherever that meets local needs should not be optional, nor should it simply consist of reduced fees and other modest measures.

Instead, we believe that there must be provincial funding to ensure that space in our schools is available in disadvantaged neighbourhoods for key community services and activities without charge and as a right. The priority for the services and activities to be offered should be for those that serve the local community. They should be determined in light of community strengths and needs and, increasingly, by the communities themselves. As we outline below, funding should be available to bring communities together to determine their needs and priorities, to increase needed services and to support active and creative outreach to make sure that the services are truly accessible to those who need them the most.

We think that the preferred way to make a school available as a hub is to fund a facilities management body to lease and operate school premises in non-teaching hours, with a mandate and additional funding to work with the local community to identify program priorities for the space. The managing body would provide on-site supervision of the premises and would be responsible for maintenance in the non-school hours. All operating, insurance and security costs for those hours would, in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, be a provincial responsibility.

The leasing body would have two key characteristics: facilities management expertise, and knowledge of community and other programming. Municipalities might want to use or establish agencies to do this, or organizations like the Y might well be interested. No doubt there are other service organizations with the skills and interest that should have this opportunity.

The reason for identifying an outside body is to avoid further complicating the already-difficult challenges faced by the school boards and principals. We believe that school principals should not have this administrative burden and should be free to concentrate on ensuring the best possible learning environment for their students. Of course, this generally already includes working to ensure school involvement with the community and the community's activities within the school, and this should carry over into involvement with the body managing the facility during the hours it is being used as a hub. But it need not and should not involve the administration of the premises off hours nor the complex task of organizing communities so that they can help to determine needs, set priorities and allocate space.

In opting for an outside services manager it is nonetheless crucial that, if they are also a service provider, they not be allowed to favour their own programs over those of others seeking to use the space. The job of the facilities manager in a community hub model is to build the community, not provide its own services. They would not be retained to operate their own programs, but rather to fairly broker a process by which the community determined its priorities. In so doing, they would have to balance the scales so that the most articulate, largest and best resourced groups do not obtain all of the time and space. Indeed, a minimum guarantee for youth-led organizations and other less advantaged organizations should be part of the contractual arrangements until the community is fully ready to determine its own priorities.

Conclusion

Other provinces, including Saskatchewan and Quebec, seem to be ahead of Ontario in reaping the many benefits of turning schools into vibrant community hubs. We very much hope that this report will help put Ontario in the forefront of that movement, as we see an enormous potential to address the roots of violence involving youth through this approach. We nonetheless repeat that, if for any reason a hub cannot be built in and around a school in any given disadvantaged neighbourhood, a hub must nonetheless be provided.

2. Supports for Resident Engagement

The Need

We start from the premise that an active and cohesive community is a strong and healthy community and that a strong and healthy community does not provide an environment that easily creates the immediate risk factors for violence involving youth. Given that, the provincial interest in building strong and healthy communities is clear.

But that which is clear is not necessarily also easy. From the perspective of the immediate risk factors for violence involving youth, the communities that have the greatest need for strength and cohesion often are the least able to achieve them. This is so despite the dedicated, tenacious and often successful efforts of many of their residents to not only raise strong families, but also to build social networks within their communities.

Sadly, the circumstances we set out in Chapter 5 are such that these good efforts are all-too-often overwhelmed by negative forces. Many residents are already under enormous pressures just to survive on a day-to-day basis. Many are simply too tired and stressed to be able to make the time to work on community cohesion, or too determined to move away at the first opportunity to want to do so, even though they have the skills and knowledge. Long commutes to low-wage jobs, or the scramble to find and access services for their families, or the pressures of single parenthood on social assistance, or living in a climate of fear and mistrust all create real and present barriers to community building.

What Government Can Do

These barriers will not be overcome unless proven resident engagement techniques are put in place and supported. We do not enter into a detailed discussion of the various models and theories of community organizing. Community development and community organizing have been underway for a very long time, and many important lessons have been learned. Agencies and community groups have written in detail and repeatedly about how to build strong communities.

Our point in this section is not to debate those theories but rather to join those who believe that the provincial government needs to do much more than it has to date to support resident engagement in the life and functioning of the disadvantaged neighbourhoods. In our immediate context, this need arises from two linked matters.

The first is the vital way in which this community building can feed into a broader and more transformative approach to governance. The second is how at the same time it can help address the roots of violence involving youth.

Given its interest in both of these objectives, in our view, it follows that the Province must financially support the work required to grow and sustain resident engagement. This must be done in a way that discerns and respects the strengths, efforts and accomplishments of these communities. The core task for governments is to enable residents of disadvantaged areas to come together to address the conditions that are leading to violence in their community without disrupting and disempowering the sources of strength already in play in that community. Based on this sense of the task at hand, and without drawing a conclusion as to the best mechanisms, we note that the Action for Neighbourhood Change approach, which now operates in Thunder Bay as well as Toronto, offers several valuable lessons.

That program of resident engagement was begun as a national action research project in February 2005 to explore resident-led neighbourhood development. The action research model on which it is based helps communities identify the issues they consider most crucial to their well-being and then supports social and political work around those issues. Members of our staff attended the "Building Communities From the Inside Out" conference in Toronto in November 2007. Speaking at the conference, leading American exponent of community change Jim Diers noted that people come together around projects, not abstract meetings.

The action research approach seeks to embrace the unique needs of, and solutions required by, individual communities where poverty is deepest and growing. What distinguishes it from other Canadian neighbourhood initiatives is the degree to which the principle of resident-led change is embedded in all activity and decision-making, and the commitment that was made by all participants to do, reflect, learn, course-correct and share. The core idea is to help neighbourhoods become strong and resilient by connecting residents with each other and linking them to supporting organizations. This builds leadership capacity and creates a sense of "collective efficacy" as residents learn that they can influence decisions that advance the well-being of their neighbourhood (Makhoul, 2007: 4).

In addition to financially supporting this or other kinds of resident engagement work, the government must create a clear incentive for it. In our view, one of the best incentives is to make it very clear that the goal is to devolve real responsibility to a community as it becomes organized. If it is known that something real, concrete and meaningful will result from the inevitably arduous organizational efforts, they are more likely to succeed. The potential governance role and the more immediate work to shape a community hub will provide the kind of "projects" that, as Jim Diers noted at the conference mentioned above, are essential to drive resident engagement.

It is also important that the government send a clear message that it understands community development is a slow and messy process, and accepts that there will be frequent bumps on the road and many detours between the initial hopeful beginning and a strong and vibrant community. The government must be clear that it is willing to take some risks along the way in light of the importance of the goal, and that it will not abandon the process at the first hint of trouble. The funding mechanism we propose at the end of this part is designed to advance these principles.

As well, the government should strengthen initiatives already in place to assist grassroots work. As an example, we note the role that the community legal clinics play in bringing law and justice to the most disadvantaged areas and groups. Their core role has always included community development to these ends — social workers were part of the original model, for example — but this valuable work has often had to be sacrificed to the pressures of an intense need for individual legal services. The clinics are already located in many disadvantaged communities and have local boards and good connections with agencies, making it possible for a modest increment in their funding to be powerfully leveraged to support resident engagement.

Finally, it is important that the government ensure that there is community space to sustain this resident engagement work. This involves supporting the hubs discussed above, but, as noted, also ensuring that within them there is space for resident engagement efforts.

In summary, we see the Province's role in this area being to support these efforts by making clear in tangible ways that they are valued, by providing structural and financial supports, by being active participants in resident engagement work already underway in municipalities and by demonstrating a continuing commitment to work in partnership as these efforts build community capacity. We emphasize the word "support" because, if communities are to be strong for the long haul and the tough issues, it is the individuals within them who must have the will, and invest the substantial time and commitment required, to function in more cohesive ways.

We speak largely about a provincial obligation in this regard because of the need for a provincewide approach to community building and because of the clear provincial interest in the outcomes to be obtained. Nonetheless, it is clear to us that this community development work needs to be done in close collaboration with the municipalities, which have an essential and central role at the local level. This is especially true in places like Thunder Bay and Toronto and others where this kind of foundational work is already underway. We discuss under Pillar 4 the concept of a Neighbourhood Strategic Partnership to facilitate this, but need to be clear here that the role we see for the Province in providing support and funding for these initiatives should be grounded in work with and should build on the expertise and initiatives of local governments.

A Role for Colleges and Universities

Outside the governmental sphere and in addition to the valuable related work that many funding bodies and municipalities are undertaking, there is another very important but largely untapped public resource, which can be brought to bear on this issue. We refer in this regard to the resources and talents within our colleges and universities, many of which are located near the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods, and all of which we know to be interested in building and supporting their local communities.

Indeed, one of the first people to contact us after we were appointed to conduct this review was Sheldon Levy, the president of Ryerson University. His offer to sponsor a forum led to an extremely productive session at Ryerson this February, which brought together presidents and senior leaders from 13 colleges and universities and a number of senior leaders from communities and community-serving agencies.

These educational institutions already have very impressive outreach and engagement programs to help bring disadvantaged youth into the learning environments they offer. These reflect the institutions' understanding that education is critical for life chances and success and that education can help to break the cycle of poverty. These initiatives involve creating community access, building educational capacity and conducting outreach in the form of information, mentoring and supports for academic success.

We absolutely agree that higher education is a key way to improve the future for many youth and we acknowledge and applaud those efforts. For our more immediate purpose, however, we asked that the forum focus on the other ways in which colleges and universities can build their communities. This led to a very wide-ranging and stimulating session at Ryerson University in which we heard about the potential for colleges and universities to support their communities in three additional key ways.

The first lies in the enormous talent pool that resides in the faculty and students in these institutions. These talents can be of enormous benefit to new and emerging community organizations in areas such as strategic development, financial administration, drafting requests for proposals, serving on boards and preparing analyses and reports. These are all skills that come naturally to those in the colleges and university sector, but that are often in short supply and overstretched within the most needy communities. As well, beyond these direct supports to community organizations, students and faculty members can help strengthen the community's residents by acting as coaches, advisers, mentors and volunteers.

In addition, colleges and universities have an enormous capacity for research. There are many opportunities to help community groups or agencies conduct evaluations, service mapping and needs assessments, reviews of relevant best practices and other small-scale research projects. And, on a larger scale, the community and the post-secondary sector can also work together, often with the local municipality, which knows well the longer-term research needs, to identify and carry out research agendas and projects to support long-term social investments. One leading example of this is the collective role a number of post-secondary institutions in British Columbia played with their communities in developing the evidentiary case for the early childhood learning initiative discussed in Pillars 1 and 2.

Finally, we expect that there are many instances where physical resources (e.g., classrooms, athletic facilities, computer labs) can be used by and shared with the community.

It is of note that what we are proposing is very much a two-way street. At present, the community can and does provide resources to the post-secondary sector by making available placements, internships, service learning opportunities for students and settings for community-based research. What was exciting about the Ryerson forum was the degree of energy and commitment we saw around the discussion of how colleges and universities could increase their reciprocation to the communities.

Now a framework must be developed to build on what is already underway and to shape the initiatives that will flow from the forum. Both pathways of access for communities and viable structures for sustained collaboration are needed. We think that this task is best left with the post-secondary sector and the communities, and are confident that the very powerful discussions and insights at this forum will provide a vital new impetus for further and better efforts in this regard.

3. Strengthening the Service and Program Providers

The Problem

To the same extent that racism and poverty predominated in what we heard about the roots of violence involving youth, the negative impacts of short-term project funding predominated in everything we heard about the agencies trying their best to work with youth and their families.

This topic could easily consume an entire report, and indeed volumes have been written about it. In short, the core of the issue is that over the last two or three decades, and for a large variety of reasons, governments have increasingly relied upon community organizations and the non-profit sector to deliver a myriad of important services. These range from mental health services for youth and sports and arts programs to youth justice services, and include a vast number of social programs in all imaginable domains. Indeed, it is likely that most services needed by disadvantaged youth, their families and communities are delivered in whole or in part through contractual services, with generally only the agencies at the "hard" end of the system such as police, Crowns, courts and jails or long-established bodies like schools having stable funding and permanent staff.

A recent document entitled *Heads Up Ontario*, commissioned by the Community Social Planning Council of Toronto, expressed the matter this way:

> The 'perfect storm' facing community service organizations results from the confluence of three trends: an increased reliance by governments upon the sector as a deliverer of services, persistent under-funding of the sector's program and administrative infrastructure, and the pressing requirement for increased service and community building initiatives to address the impact of growing inequality, poverty and discrimination in our communities (Clutterbuck and Howarth, n.d.: Executive Summary).

The reliance on this sector would not be a matter of grave concern were it not for the precariousness and fragmentation that results from the way these community and non-profit-sector services are funded. With most funding being based on a particular project, and being short term, these agencies find themselves spending a very high proportion of their time preparing applications for grants, juggling staff to fit the needs of various contracts and accounting for the funding they receive. Indeed, a multi-service Community Health Centre in Ottawa advised us that at one point they were managing over 50 service contracts on top of their core mandate, that they typically have more than 30 and that this would not be unusual for such centres.

This approach to funding also means that the core costs of most agencies are not supported, with the agencies being somehow expected to have administrative staff, premises, computers and other infrastructure ready to be put into operation for a six- or nine- or 12-month contract. No one seeks to identify where the resources for these core supports are coming from, even though in many cases the contracted-for service could not be provided without them, and they are an obvious cost of delivering the contract. Similarly, little thought seems to be given to the requirement for core funding if core staff are to be retained to develop relationships in the community and with other agencies, or to allow for board development and the kind of supports we identified earlier as being necessary to make youth participation on boards meaningful.

As a result, to again cite the *Heads Up Ontario* report,

> The sector is now one of the most dependent areas of our economy on part-time precarious work arrangements; wage rates are consistently below those of other public and private sector comparators…; the administrative infrastructure of organizations has been hollowed out to stretch resources to shore up programs under-funded by government; large amounts of staff time that agencies used to be able commit to community building and service delivery are being siphoned off to attend to ever-increasing fundraising and administrative requirements (Executive Summary).

As well, the agencies in this sector find themselves in competition with each other for scarce dollars. The obvious efficiencies that would come from better cooperation in the field are actually discouraged by the funding model being used. Moreover, the competitive nature of the process by which grants are obtained can favour larger, established agencies, which have the resources and the experience to prepare attractive proposals and to absorb the cost of failing to win some of their bids. It has also been noted how valuing expertise in writing proposals over expertise in the issues facing a community can cut out the less-established and perhaps more nimble and innovative service providers, and can particularly disadvantage emerging youth-led organizations in these competitive processes.

Indeed, we were struck by the pertinence of comments in a recent Council of Europe publication on youth and exclusion in disadvantaged urban areas. Illustrating the reach of this problem, the authors noted how well the police and others work together in law enforcement and noted that, by contrast: "Within the prevention chain there is hardly any cooperation, network consultation or mutual harmonisation" (Hardiman and Lapeyre, 2004: 16).

For all of these reasons, we agree with the following conclusion from the *Heads Up Ontario* report:

> In the absence of … dedicated funding for administrative infrastructure to steward and sustain them, important new initiatives are also at risk of foregoing any intended lasting impact on community conditions. (Clutterbuck and Howarth, n.d.: 42).

Overall, these various impacts of the current funding regime, although largely unintended, mean that services cannot devote all of their limited resources to their clients when they are constantly losing staff to better-paying or just more stable jobs. And where the services themselves can come and go with each funding cycle, it is impossible for clients to build the rapport and trust necessary to truly benefit. Given the enormous need for services to address the roots we have identified, we cannot justify the many costs of providing valued services or trusted workers for a brief time period and then withdrawing them, something many have told us does more harm to vulnerable youth than had the services never been available.

These costs do not fall on the Province, except to the unmeasured extent to which the value received by the Province for its funds is eroded by the fragmentation and the process-intense nature of the funding system. Indeed, one of the reasons governments proceed in this way is to reduce financial outlays by paying only for the exact services needed for a defined period of time in a defined area. Instead, most of the cost falls on the service providers, their employees and, most significantly, the intended beneficiaries of their services.

Towards Longer-Term Solutions

These problems have been identified by service providers for a very long time, but have not been addressed by government. We do not propose to outline a detailed set of reforms in this report, but rather will offer some reflections on how those reforms could best be approached. We then put forward three interim proposals. The details of the longer-term reforms, we believe, need to be the subject of short, focused discussions among those involved in this sector on a day-to-day basis.

In terms of stabilizing the sector, it seems to us that the Province needs to accept the fundamental importance of these services to the goal of addressing the roots of violence involving youth. Then it must accept the corresponding need for a funding structure to support stability, sustainability, innovation and the flexibility to adjust to changing local circumstances. It also needs to commit to acting on that need and engage immediately with the service providers to develop the appropriate mechanisms.

A useful starting point may be to consider the different funding mechanisms and why they are or are not appropriate in any given circumstance. The main ones to consider in this regard are the following:

- Core funding that would provide multi-year funds to support the infrastructure of community organizations accredited through an appropriate process
- Sustainable funding for programs shown to be effective by an appropriate evaluation mechanism

- Shorter-term innovation funding to test new approaches to address the roots, and occurrence, of violence involving youth
- Funding to support initiatives that promote collaboration across agencies, geographical boundaries and/or sectors
- Capacity-building funding, to enable communities to better define their own priorities, within the context of the overarching youth policy framework, and to promote community linkages and coordination
- Youth engagement funding to empower young people to play a greater role in shaping their futures within the community.

Some excellent advice on how to proceed from this kind of starting point is found in a recent report for the federal government by an independent blue-ribbon panel on grants and contributions programs prepared by Frances Lankin, CEO and chair of United Way Toronto, and Ian Clarke, a former secretary of the federal government's Treasury Board (Lankin and Clark, 2006). That report made a number of valuable recommendations, of which for present purposes we cite only the following:

> "[E]ncourage the multi-year funding of projects where projects or activities are multi-year in nature" (Recommendation 12). In essence, this means that governments should provide increased stability for their community partners when the tasks they take on extend over more than one fiscal year.
>
> "[E]ncourage departments and agencies to revisit the issue of whether and in what circumstances core funding is warranted to supplement project-specific funding" (Recommendation 15). Again, this calls on government to consider the longer-range benefits of supporting a strong community base for the work government will want to do in communities over time.
>
> "[E]stablish as a principle that, to the extent that the policy objective underlying the grant or contribution program is the delivery of federal programs through a third party, funding levels should reflect the full cost of program delivery" (Recommendation 16). This reflects the fact that too many project funding schemes seek a "free ride" on infrastructure others are paying for, or which is being provided by staff working well beyond the hours for which they are paid.

It seems to us that the discussions that could start from these and other core premises could usefully look at a collaborative funding mechanism involving two orders of government and a community funder, which was in place from the early 1980s to 1995 in Ontario.

Known as the Community and Neighbourhood Support Services Program (CNSSP), it brought the Ontario government, Metro Toronto and United Way of Greater Toronto together to address the lack of community supports in some parts of Toronto.

The purpose of the CNSSP funding program was to provide ongoing core administration funding to neighbourhood-based organizations offering programs and services that responded to the needs of the local residents. The program aimed to strengthen the capacity of neighbourhoods across Toronto to respond to local social service needs. Target organizations for the CNSSP program had no other form of secure funding for their central administrative expenses.

The CNSSP core funding program was designed to assist agencies that provide a variety of social services functions as a focal point within the communities they serve, and encourage resident participation and leadership development. Core eligible expenses under this program included administrative salaries, such as the executive director and secretary/bookkeeper; expenses related to volunteer coordination, program development and community development; building occupancy costs; and general office expenses. These costs were assumed by the three funding partners, with the Province paying half and the balance evenly divided between Metro and the United Way.

In the result, the three funders collaborated in ways that allowed each to contribute to core and sustained funding for community bodies while maintaining their own granting programs for particular projects. Among other significant advances was the use of a common application and review process, which streamlined administration by the agencies and freed up money and time to provide services in their communities.

Just as we were advised to avoid reinventing the wheel, it seems to us that the Province could usefully look back at the CNSSP years to find viable approaches to the very serious funding problems being faced in Ontario's communities. Naturally, it must look beyond Toronto, and we believe that the governance mechanisms proposed in Pillar 4 will point the way to do so.

Immediate Measures

As noted, we do not propose to go further to make specific proposals about the required new funding structure for community agencies. We do, though, believe that the government needs to do three key things in the short run to take the roughest edges off the system, at least insofar as services for disadvantaged youth, their families and their communities are concerned. They are:

- Streamline and simplify the process by which agencies are funded.
- Ensure better coordination and alignment when the Province seeks proposals from agencies to provide services in communities.
- Create a centre for excellence through program assessments.

Streamlining the Funding Process

In terms of simplifying the process by which agencies receive and account for funds, the independent blue-ribbon panel mentioned above started from the premise that the reporting and accountability regime should reflect the actual circumstances and capacities of funding recipients and the real needs of the government. We agree and believe that the goal should be to reduce the reporting burden on community agencies and rationalize reporting requirements across ministries and, to the extent possible, among other funding agencies.

In this connection, the panel made a number of practical proposals, including reducing the number of cost categories, developing funding agreements that allow recipients greater latitude to shift funds between categories, moving towards standard application forms and focusing reporting to the greatest extent possible on outcomes achieved, rather than just on work done. There are existing examples of these approaches; what seems to be lacking is the desire to look to them as starting premises for a new vision of how Ontario funds its community partners.

We believe that, to move in this direction, the Province should assign a body the task of standardizing to the extent possible the application forms its ministries use as well as their reporting requirements. This could start at a relatively modest financial threshold and be extended as experience was gained. Overall, the objective should be to standardize towards simplicity, with the smallest number of acceptable categories for each reporting requirement becoming the norm. As well, the body should work with other orders of government to more closely align auditing standards and expectations for the funding provided to community agencies. Probity should not be sacrificed, but the measures used to achieve it should be proportionate to the risk and to the impact they have on a community agency's ability to deliver the service in question.

Funding Alignment

The second short-term issue arises from our acceptance that the enormous reliance on project funding, and the wide array of issues and purposes it addresses, are such that it will be with us for some time to come. While the youth policy framework in Pillar 2 and the governance initiatives in Pillar 4 will together lead to enhanced structures for collaboration by funders, we believe that these can be accelerated, and many of the interim problems ameliorated, if the government takes some of the burden of its own complexity and lack of integration off the shoulders of the community.

It seems to us that the secretariat we propose in Pillar 4 should include a small staff component to seek alignment among provincial requests for proposals relevant to the roots of violence involving youth. It should use its knowledge of ministry programs and the new youth policy framework to promote funding coordination among ministries. It should do so in at least two key ways.

First, it should assess the government's funding programs to ascertain common elements and themes, and areas of overlap or obvious gaps, with a view to encouraging ministries to explore whether they can align their various needs to support a more coordinated approach to the goals each is pursuing. We do not intend by this that there be an extra bureaucratic step in the funding process. The review would take place as programs were being developed within ministries, or could even occur after the fact with a view to influencing the next request for proposals. This would be an incremental learning process rather than a policing action. Over time, if these potentials for alignment can be seized upon by the Province, those responding to provincial requests for the provision of community services will increasingly be entering into a context that is already collaborative.

Second, in the many instances where a number of ministries or programs are funding one agency for distinct services, the secretariat could serve as a resource to sort out any contradictions and conflicts among the various project deliverables and reporting requirements, and facilitate a smooth flow of funding. It could also look for opportunities to provide stability by finding within the various funding envelopes the resources needed to support core costs, pending the establishment of a broader mechanism like the former CNSSP.

In addition to these initiatives within the provincial government, funding should be provided in each disadvantaged neighbourhood for a local coordination body to strategically coordinate services and improve access to them. The bodies funded for this purpose would work at the local level to encourage the coordination of service providers, undertake service mapping and provide easily accessible program information. This would help to counter the strain high-needs clients necessarily place on services, in part by avoiding duplication and gaps. It would also facilitate access by people who need multiple services precisely because they lead chaotic and unstable lives and are forced to live in conditions that increase the negative effects of their conditions and the difficulty of accessing services.

We believe that the local coordination bodies could be a natural place to offer advice to those responding to the government's requests for proposals on collaborating in the greater interests of the neighbourhood, and encourage the reflection of that approach in their bids. If alignment and coordination could accordingly be driven from the bottom as well as the top, the potential for a powerful, positive convergence would be significant.

A Centre for Excellence Through Program Assessments

The third short-term initiative we believe is called for would address the need for continuous learning about what works in communities. As Chapter 8 demonstrated, there are thousands of relevant programs being delivered through hundreds of agencies and by countless community groups, but with almost no independent and reliable outcomes-based assessments. The lack of such assessments does not mean that these are not good programs, but it does mean that there is often no evidence-based way to allocate scarce dollars, identify reliable best practices or find ways to make good programs even better. In particular, without outcomes-based assessments, there is no way to identify which programs actually advance the goal of addressing the roots of violence involving youth.

At the level of broad systemic initiatives, as opposed to small local programs, we believe there is a need to fund an independent body to assess results against expectations and costs. This body could operate out of a university or college and would maintain a close working relationship with the secretariat we propose in Pillar 4. It would conduct outcomes-based assessments at the program or regional level and serve as a best-practices resource for government, funders and agencies. It could be encouraged to enter into similar arrangements with other orders of government to perform a similar service, and thus evolve into a centre of excellence for the province as a whole. And, as we outline in Pillar 4, the centre could play an important clearing house and advisory role as experience is developed with the Neighbourhood Strategic Partnerships across the province.

A related issue is evaluations at the level of smaller-scale local initiatives. At present, these are often resisted because, in an area where need inevitably outstrips resources, agencies are scrambling to keep up and often see real harm in taking scarce dollars away from immediately needed services to fund an evaluation. And, of course, short-term and uncertain funding is hardly likely to inspire support for an evaluation process, which will either come to fruition after the project is over, or may be used to cut an agency's funding or disadvantage it against other bidders for future work.

To address these barriers, two things are needed (assuming initiatives run long enough to make an evaluation feasible). First, where the government wants evaluations it must provide dedicated funding for them beyond the cost of the specific services being funded. And second, an independent source of advice on how to conduct or contract for the evaluations must be established to take this burden off agencies, ensure the use of experts, promote independence and use common methodologies as much as possible. The centre of excellence proposed above would be well-placed to provide this advice.

Given this additional role, the centre could also act as a resource to ministries issuing requests for proposals so that evaluation standards could be included in the contracts when they are signed and so that the requisite data could be collected from the outset.

4. Core Funding for Community Development

In this pillar, we have identified a small number of key areas where we believe there is a clear provincial interest in funding social infrastructure in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. In most instances, this can be effectively done through line ministries. In two areas, however, the need for independence and a long-term focus, and the potential for controversy, suggest to us that an arm's-length funding body is appropriate. These are the provision of funding for resident engagement and for youth-led organizations.

The resident-engagement funding would provide for outreach workers to undertake the kinds of engagement initiatives discussed in Section 2 above, including facilitating resident participation in community hubs and setting community priorities for their use. The funding for youth-led organizations would allow youth, subject to their accountability to the funding body, to determine their own initiatives, programs and priorities to address the roots agenda, and thus potentially create innovative models for emulation elsewhere.

The model we have in mind to deliver this new initiative could draw on the approach of the clinic-funding committee, which operated for over 20 years under the former *Legal Aid Act*. It built a network of more than 70 clinics to provide poverty law and advocacy services to communities defined by either geography or special needs. It had four key features, which we believe are appropriate here:

1. Funding decisions were made by a body arm's-length from government, on which the government had a minority of the appointees. It operated under a broad mandate that defined the core goal (poverty law services) and that gave it a great deal of policy and operational discretion on how to advance that goal.

2. Each funded clinic was anchored in and run by a local community board. Generally, a board would come together to propose a clinic for a particular community, thereby ensuring both community origins and governance. However, the funding committee also took the concept of a clinic to communities that had not yet organized around one, and worked with them to develop a board, which would then submit a proposal.

3. Within the broad parameters of being required to provide poverty law services, each clinic's board of directors was free to choose local priorities based on needs and circumstances. One clinic board might choose to focus primarily on housing issues, while another might choose immigration and a third, income maintenance.

4. Funding for the community clinics was both core and sustained. All operating costs were covered, and funding was assured from year to year unless the legislature declined to vote the needed funds globally or unless there was a serious reason to consider de-funding a particular clinic. In the latter event, a full hearing was required before funding could be removed.

Aspects of this approach can be found in the Province's Youth Challenge Fund, and we believe something similar would work well for the new funding we propose. In this approach, the government would allocate an annual amount of money to be granted and overseen within broad parameters by an arm's-length board. Those funds could be held in trust by a foundation to be disbursed on the direction of the new funding board.

Funding would be broadly assured for at least five years to allow this concept to evolve. Within that period, funding could only be removed from an organization by the funding body after providing the recipient with a hearing, or if the legislature cut or reduced the global funding for this initiative. The broad purposes of funding would be to support disadvantaged communities to address the root causes of violence involving youth, but the means to do this in a given community would be for the local organization to determine.

The funding body would accept applications from community groups proposing to employ outreach workers for resident-engagement work and from youth-led organizations, and determine which of each would best provide services in a particular community. Funding would be granted to bodies controlled by local boards of directors, which were broadly representative of the community.

Once funding was provided, it would be for the local board of each entity to determine its annual priorities. There would be clear requirements for financial accountability and working within the "roots agenda," but program content and priorities would be set at the local level.

We think there should be funding for at least one youth-led organization in each of the 50-60 most disadvantaged neighbourhoods in Ontario to reach the most disadvantaged youth and to advance the goals of a youth voice and youth engagement, which we outlined in Chapter 4 and in Pillar 1 of this chapter.

Similarly, we believe that each disadvantaged neighbourhood should have outreach workers to facilitate the kind of resident-engagement activities we also discussed above. This work requires time, commitment and stability to be effective, and accordingly needs at least a five-year commitment and a funder that is insulated from day-to-day political pressures. The ability to anchor this work around new community hubs should play an important role in facilitating resident engagement and at the same time it would help ensure that the Province gets the best return on its investments in these hubs.

Conclusion

The agenda outlined in this pillar is an ambitious one, but its elements are well-tested and widely supported. What is needed now is a recognition by the Province of the necessity to adopt a comprehensive and sustained approach to building strong communities in order to address the roots of violence involving youth before an entrenched underclass is created.

The Fourth Pillar:
Integrated Governance for Sustainable Progress Towards a Safer Ontario

Introduction

While we come to the issue of governance towards the end of our analysis, we consider it to be our most significant and pressing set of proposals. Its positioning late in our report flows from the need to first outline our proposed course of action before describing the governance mechanisms needed to put it into place and to sustain it over the long haul.

There are three central aspects to the governance proposals we are making. Together, they will provide an effective and sustainable way to address the many deep and tenacious roots of violence involving youth which we have identified. All three are needed: addressing these roots is a highly complex task, and a simple exhortation to work in a more coordinated way will neither obtain nor sustain progress.

First, and fundamentally, the provincial government must organize itself to drive forward and sustain an integrated long-range strategy across the many ministries that have important roles on this issue. Without an effective governance structure at the provincial level, our experience tells us that no meaningful progress can be made.

Second, the provincial government must work with the other orders of government to create both the structures and the relationships that permit the coordination of the relevant activities across governments. We appreciate that this may be a challenge with the federal government, but there are no external impediments to the Province's building a new governance relationship with the municipalities on these issues. As that is done, we believe that success will encourage the federal government to accept its significant and serious responsibilities in this area.

Third, the Province must begin to work with municipalities, and if possible the federal government, to bring communities into the governance framework in meaningful ways.

New Governance Mechanisms Within the Ontario Government

1. Why New Provincial Governance Mechanisms Are Essential

In our view, the creation of new governance mechanisms for the Province's own operations is both a keystone and a benchmark. It is a keystone because the issues that must be addressed are not only large, complex and spread across many ministries, but as well interact with each other and play out in economically and socially diverse communities across the Province. Without the keystone of governance mechanisms that cut across the many silos that now exist in the provincial government, any edifice of piecemeal change will rapidly collapse.

New governance mechanisms are also a benchmark. Without alignment at the provincial level to break through the silos to prioritize, drive, coordinate, fund, monitor and report on the many provincial initiatives required to address the roots of violence involving youth, it will be clear to everyone working in this field that there is little reason to hope for anything beyond some modest ameliorations of the status quo.

All who are even generally familiar with governance these days know that ministries often operate as silos. The Province is not alone in that regard and it has taken steps such as Service Ontario and local health integration networks to address the issue in some areas. Still, we met no one familiar with the issues in our mandate who did not feel that Ontario's silo mentality remains a real and present threat to sustainable change on the issues we have identified. We heard this as much from senior officials and ministers as we did from those on the ground, who struggle every day to try to cope with this governance gridlock to make progress on their youth initiatives.

Although we state this matter baldly, we note that the current government inherited rather than created this situation. Silos have come to characterize most governments in the last three or four decades, for a variety of similar reasons. Prominent among these are the scope and scale of government, the short timelines between elections, the ever-heightened demand for accountability and the understandable need Cabinet ministers see to demonstrate mastery of their own portfolios and to make their mark within their own domains.

Ministers carry intense, day-to-day responsibilities for a myriad of administrative issues, as well as for developing, seeking support and funding for and implementing the broad policy initiatives taken by their departments. In all of this, they are expected to build and maintain good relationships with their many stakeholders and the media. They must be ready to answer questions on a moment's notice on remote details of their administration, and also on the workings of their policy initiatives and their impacts on numerous distinct interests. It is little wonder that most feel stretched just to stay afloat, steer their ministry and keep as many of their stakeholders as satisfied as possible. The result is that there is limited time for sustained collaboration with colleagues.

Even where time can be found for such collaboration, there is little incentive for it. Collaboration is difficult, takes considerable time and resources, and is very much less under an individual minister's control than work within his or her area of direct responsibility. Visible failures can occur for reasons outside a minister's control; success, if achieved, is diffusely shared with colleagues. In many cases, success may not attach to those who contributed the most, perhaps at some cost to their success in a portfolio where their accountability is immediate and highly visible. In this context, it is to the government's credit that it is working in at least some areas to counter these circumstances.

But it is essential that those initiatives be intensified in the area of violence involving youth, given the nature and breadth of the issues. The still-pervasive silo reality will make meaningful progress on the issues we have identified in our report hugely difficult. This is so for three main reasons.

First, the complex intertwining of those issues and their impacts condemns to frustration and failure any initiative that is not structured to address that interconnectedness. Second, the size of the task and the time required to accomplish it are such that strong alignment mechanisms are essential to counter the inevitable centrifugal forces that otherwise would draw ministries back to their core agendas. And third, success is only possible if officials, communities, agencies and other orders of government are inspired to join these endeavours and motivated to commit their time and energies to a long-term strategy. They all have a keen ear for provincial sincerity and priorities. While they are prepared to work with the Province to ensure complementary directions for the public good, they know that the Province must focus its resources and commitments on a small number of large, longer-term objectives, and they also know what the signs of such a commitment are.

In an area as complex and wide-ranging as this one, the key sign for them, as it is for us, will be whether the Province has put in place governance mechanisms that manifestly can and will overcome the barriers that silos create to focused, sustainable, integrated and long-term progress on these particular issues. Doing so will have immediate, positive and galvanizing impacts. A failure to do so will certainly undercut the potential to harness the resources, goodwill and cooperation needed if progress is to be made in addressing the roots. Whatever the Province does or does not do about its silos will send a clear message, one way or the other, to all who have a choice about whether to commit their discretionary energy and resources to this area.

For all of these reasons, we do not believe that the roots of violence involving youth can or will be meaningfully addressed without new provincial governance mechanisms to counteract the silos and provide a coordinated, effective, sustainable and motivating focus for the work that must be done.

2. Our Proposal

Overview, Principles and Precedents

To help us grapple with the governance issues, we commissioned the Ottawa-based Institute On Governance to prepare a research report on collaboration within and among governments. In their report, the institute states it found a small number of pertinent precedents showing promise or success and distilled from them, and just as importantly from some unsuccessful coordination efforts, a number of ways to overcome barriers to increased coordination within one level of government. The institute then tested its findings with a focus group of senior Ontario officials and another of leaders of community organizations. As summarized in the report, the most promising governance structures include the following elements:

- Sustained and committed political and senior management leadership, with specific mandates (ministers) or performance objectives (senior management) and clear ownership of the initiative
- A coordinated and coherent policy framework
- Outcomes-based strategies and action plans that provide a clear direction about what is to be accomplished over the medium to long term
- Key performance indicators and targets linked to outcomes that are tracked
- Interdepartmental agreements linked to the strategy and action plan, which commit departments to the agreed-upon objectives, performance measures and delivery strategies, and which outline what they are specifically responsible for and for which they will be held accountable
- Adequate resources to support implementation of the strategies as well as to support coordination
- Alignment of funding mechanisms or their consolidation into a single source of funding
- Regular and transparent progress reporting on outcomes
- Independent monitoring and advice from key stakeholders outside of government to increase transparency and legitimacy
- A well-resourced and integrated research and evaluation component to support the development of policies, strategies and plans; define targets and indicators; monitor progress, and suggest revisions to approaches (Institute On Governance, Volume 4: 456).

The institute then went on to outline the following key factors for success in implementing these kinds of governance structures:

- Strong, committed and sustained political leadership — either the Premier or a senior minister

- Strong, committed and sustained senior management leadership — from deputies and from other senior public servants in relevant ministries

- Interdepartmental coordination at various levels from the political through to the management and to operational levels

- Engagement of youth and other key stakeholders in the design, delivery, monitoring and evaluation of any policy or initiative

- The engagement of expertise for policy development and review, advice on best practices and ongoing research and evaluation

- A well-resourced support unit (466).

We agree with this advice, which accords with much of what we heard both here and in Britain and, indeed, with our own experience in government. At the most basic level, we say to the Premier that new governance mechanisms are essential, for the reasons already outlined, and that the above findings should guide how they are structured. But in the interests of expediting progress and respecting the valuable advice we received from many quarters, we feel a need to go further to offer our advice on a governance model. We base this advice in part on our own experience, but primarily on the available research and on the detailed knowledge of the issues and considerations surrounding the roots issues, that so many have helped us acquire over the last year.

As we look back, we are struck by the progress made by the Cabinet Committee on Race Relations, which operated from 1979 to 1990 within several governments from two different political parties. As documented in the paper prepared by the Institute On Governance and published in Volume 4, that committee took on a wide-ranging, complex and very sensitive issue well before it was a matter of mainstream consideration. It made very considerable progress in building an effective response to racism within Ontario society. It was not a reactive committee, but instead generated proposals for action by ministries. It had staff who could and did engage with communities on issues like public housing and policing. It directly engaged with the private sector on issues like racial diversity in advertising, and issued occasional public reports, but primarily used its direct access to Cabinet to shape the race-relations agendas for a number of ministries and the government as a whole over its lifespan (Institute On Governance, Volume 4: 439).

For present purposes, the key lessons are that a Cabinet committee of this kind can have a galvanizing effect within and outside government and, if supported by a staff structure and led by a dedicated minister who has the Premier's backing, can make a real difference even in complex, sensitive and groundbreaking areas. This is a very different role for a Cabinet committee than the role they have played in recent years, and care is required to understand those differences in assessing our proposal.

We have also been struck by the experience in England with the neighbourhood renewal strategy. It was developed by a Cabinet office unit and overseen by a body that reported to the deputy prime minister. The permanent secretary (deputy minister) at the Treasury and later the Cabinet secretary chaired the strategy's deputy-minister level steering committee. Overall, the strategy accomplished the impressive task of not only focusing numerous departments on concrete ways to improve conditions in the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods in England over a period of years, but did so in large measure by having departments set public and measurable objectives in some considerable detail, connecting those targets to the departments' own funding and reporting on progress to the public. While, in chapters 7 and 10 we endorse a similar substantive approach in Ontario's disadvantaged neighbourhoods, our interest in this chapter lies in the governance lessons to be drawn from this initiative.

We are also mindful that Premier McGuinty has relied upon results teams for a number of key initiatives in the fields of health, education and climate change. These teams, which include the responsible minister, some senior officials and outside experts, have the great advantage of being led by the Premier and offer the attraction of the involvement of outside expertise. They seem to work well on issues that are more focused than the one we are facing, although we are advised that they do not report directly to Cabinet and that decisions taken by them have to work their way back up through the normal approval channels.

The fact that the results teams do not make formal decisions would seem to rule them out for the role we feel is necessary. As well, it is difficult to see how the wide range of ministries involved in our many issues and the need to manage collaboration with other governments and with communities could be accommodated in a results team structure. While we therefore do not see the results team model as the core governance mechanism, such teams could well play an important role if any particular issues arise that cannot easily be resolved within the core structure we propose.

If results teams are brought into play, we would suggest one change to their current operations. We believe that they should be able to take the results of their deliberations to Cabinet via the Cabinet committee we propose be established, rather than going through other approval processes. This would solidify that committee's role in the governance of this agenda, and avoid the risks of separate decision-making tracks in an area where coordination and cohesion are essential to progress.

We have also noted that the Premier chose to establish a Cabinet committee to address his most recent signature issue of poverty reduction. While it appears to be primarily a policy and stakeholder engagement committee rather than the combined policy and operational committee we feel is needed for the roots agenda, we are encouraged by this approach to a related and very high-profile issue. It immediately sent a message of seriousness both within and outside the government, and has been seen as a powerful symbol of commitment. It has provided a significant reason for those with countless other pressures and incentives to once again devote time and energy to this important but generally unaddressed issue.

As well, the Premier established a Cabinet Office unit to support that committee, rather than relying on a lead ministry, and similarly early this year created a new Climate Change Secretariat with a strong mandate to work from within Cabinet Office to provide comprehensive corporate leadership and support government-wide collaboration to achieve results on that complex and important matter.

The following proposals reflect these developments in Ontario and also draw upon what we consider to be powerful and relevant approaches elsewhere and in Ontario's own past.

Structures for Political Direction and Oversight and Public Participation:

i) A Cabinet Committee on Social Inclusion and Anti-Racism

Considering the principles set out by the Institute On Governance and our own experience, we believe that Ontario can best coordinate and drive forward the work needed to address the roots of violence involving youth by establishing a Cabinet committee, supported by a strong and active secretariat, to manage, align and advance the required work. The active and sustained operational role we propose for this committee would be modelled on the Cabinet Committee on Race Relations, on which each of us served when we were in government. The policy and motivational aspects of the committee would also draw inspiration from the Premier's recent establishment of a Cabinet Committee on Poverty Reduction.

We refer to this committee as one on social inclusion and anti-racism, as the former term reflects the long-term goal the Province must pursue to address all of the roots of violence involving youth, and the latter reflects the regrettable need to pay particular attention to racism. The Premier will, of course, decide on the name. We nonetheless note the value of a high-profile recognition of the importance of anti-racism to addressing the roots. We note as well its ability to give comfort and support to racism's many victims while sustaining focus and resolve on a tenacious root, which many others prefer to avoid even discussing.

Our experience suggests that placing a Cabinet committee at the heart of the governance structure will send an immediate, positive and galvanizing message to those affected by violence involving youth. It will make it clear to ministers, deputy ministers, communities, agencies and the public at large that the Premier sees this as a high and urgent priority. As it has in the past, it will motivate real progress on this issue at all levels in our society.

Such a committee will, however, only be effective if its role goes beyond being reactive to proposals from ministries. Instead, it needs a mandate to set an overall agenda for the government and specific action plans for each ministry. It then must have the responsibility to vet ministry proposals for priority and alignment, set outcome measures and annual targets, advise on corporate funding priorities, and drive and monitor the resulting work. The specific mandate we envisage would be as follows:

- Develop the government's policy agenda on action to address the roots of violence involving youth, with a clear focus on anti-racism.
- Set corporate priorities and ensure the alignment of ministry action plans to meet them.
- Determine outcome measures and interim targets.
- Drive, monitor and assess progress.
- Work with outside advisers.
- Publish annual progress reports with specific information on progress towards the approved outcome targets.

We believe that this committee should be structured initially to drive the government's response to our report, including the determination of the overall approach, the initial priorities, the process to put together a comprehensive plan around the outcome measures and targets we propose in Pillar 2 and Chapter 10, and the longer-term governance structure. In this initial phase, we would propose that the membership be quite small. It would not be a brokerage committee, but rather a very focused group of primarily senior ministers, who could situate the necessary work within the government's overall agenda and fiscal plan.

Once these initial determinations were made, the membership could expand to include a larger number of ministers, but should still stay small enough to make the tough decisions with reasonable dispatch. With its expanded membership, the committee's role would focus on refining the policy approach as necessary, proposing ministry actions, setting outcomes and their measures, approving policy proposals, recommending funding, monitoring outcomes, working with outside advisers and public reporting.

ii) Associate Members of the Cabinet Committee

As discussed, our experience and the advice we received suggest to us that the governing body within the provincial government should be a Cabinet committee and operate as such. This means confidentiality for its deliberations and for the advice it gives to Cabinet as a whole. At the same time, we see great value in the innovation the Premier has brought to his results teams by the inclusion of outside experts.

We accordingly propose that a small number of outside advisers be named as associate members of the committee to join its deliberations at periodic intervals. These would be individuals with a deep knowledge of the issues discussed in this report and of the challenges and opportunities in implementing them on the ground, rather than individuals whose expertise lies in a particular issue, as would be the case for those serving on a results team. They should also be individuals who can see the bigger picture and materially assist the Cabinet committee in grappling with some of the more difficult policy issues it may face.

The Cabinet committee meetings that included the associate members would not be for the purpose of making decisions, and any consensus reached would not be treated as a Cabinet decision. To make sure that the participation of the associate members is meaningful and makes good use of their time, they should have access to dedicated members of the secretariat proposed below for the purposes of briefing them and supplying them with information and support they may need to discharge their role.

iii) Premier's Advisory Council on Social Inclusion and Anti-Racism

This council could number about 15-20 individuals, who would constitute an ongoing think-tank and also serve as a sounding board and monitoring body. A significant number of the members should be youth, primarily from or working within the disadvantaged neighbourhoods. To support its work, it should have a small dedicated staff component on which its members could draw to support their participation.

We think that this advisory council should receive updates and information from the secretariat established to support the Cabinet committee, and that the Cabinet committee should be able to refer issues or reports to the advisory council for its opinion. In addition, we believe that the advisory council should be free to develop its own agenda and issue its own reports. An analogous body established under Quebec's Strategy to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion gives its advice, opinions and recommendations to the government 10 days before public release, which strikes us as a realistic balance between independence and the maintenance of a good working relationship with the government.

iv) A Social Inclusion and Anti-Racism Secretariat

To best support the kind of sustained political leadership that is necessary to drive the complex agenda outlined in this report, the governance mechanisms should include dedicated, agile and influential staff resources. The core tasks for staff would include providing strategic advice to the Cabinet committee, conducting research and planning initiatives, driving Cabinet-approved change within the bureaucracy, addressing the day-to-day issues that will arise in implementing the roots agenda, and monitoring and publishing progress towards the agreed-upon outcome measures. These crucial staff resources could, in theory, be provided through a Cabinet Office secretariat, an interministerial committee, or by having a single ministry take on the task of supporting the political oversight structure in addition to its line responsibilities.

In our view, only a Cabinet Office secretariat will have sufficient agility and leverage within government to support on a sustained basis the kind of policy-making, oversight and direction that this initiative will need. It will also be uniquely placed to support an influential research and policy group, which is not subservient to the priorities of any one ministry, and to work in a neutral way with the assessment institute we proposed in Pillar 3.

We do not believe that these tasks can be housed within a lead ministry. No one ministry has an obvious lead on the wide array of issues involved in this matter. As well, ministries have important priorities of their own, with their ministers and deputy ministers being responsible daily to numerous stakeholders with keen interests in seeing progress on issues within the ministry's direct mandate. It is simply not realistic to expect a ministry to be able to place a powerful long-term focus on issues arising within numerous other ministries, nor to have the resources, clout or perceived neutrality to drive work by those ministries and enforce standards.

An interministerial committee would be even less suited to the task at hand, calling as it would on the already stretched resources of individuals with a wide array of other responsibilities. More importantly, interministerial committees can spend inordinate amounts of time seeking common ground or balancing competing perspectives when what is needed is clear leadership. There is a vital difference between leadership that is informed by competing views and priorities and a governance process that can be held hostage by them.

But we do not come to our conclusion in favour of a Cabinet Office secretariat simply because the other options are unattractive. We see such a secretariat as having many advantages. First, it is positioned at the very heart of government, with close and ongoing contact with the most senior officials and the Premier's Office. Second, that positioning is meaningful to the rest of the public service and many key players outside it, and leads to enhanced day-to-day influence. Third, there is the freedom of movement and independence of advice that comes from not being tied to one ministry's mandate, but instead having a mandate to support a committee whose whole reason for being is to set priorities and promote alignment across a large number of ministries to achieve those priorities. Fourth, in discharging its alignment and operational-oversight roles, the Cabinet committee can rely on its own staff to serve as its agents on a day-to-day basis within the government without having to negotiate with ministries over staff resources and priorities for their work.

We are also encouraged in this direction by recent experience here and in Britain. In Ontario, we have already noted two of the Premier's very recent initiatives. The first was the creation of a Cabinet Office team to support the new Poverty Reduction Committee. The second and even more pertinent example was the creation of a Cabinet Office secretariat for the express purpose of both coordinating and driving work on the climate change agenda.

In Britain, the Social Exclusion Unit (now Task Force) has operated from within the Cabinet Office or the office of the deputy prime minister for most of the last decade. While it has to a large degree functioned as a think-tank on issues involving the very most disadvantaged groups in Britain, its former leaders were clear to us that its positioning very much allowed it to act as an instrument of governance.

Based on that experience, and for the reasons noted above, we believe that the Cabinet committee should be supported in its leadership and coordination role by a Cabinet Office secretariat, headed by a dedicated deputy minister, with the mandate outlined above, including supporting the Cabinet committee by providing research, policy and analytical support in the development and review of policies and action plans, and also serving as its operational arm in ensuring timely and effective responses by line ministries to the decisions taken by Cabinet on the committee's advice.

As well, based on the English model and having regard to the need to get at the deepest roots of violence involving youth, the secretariat should have a specific mandate to undertake or commission research for publication on issues affecting the very most excluded groups in Ontario. It should have the time and space to shine a spotlight on the most intractable problems given that no one else in government is mandated to do so and given that they are at the deepest core of social exclusion, and hence of the roots of violence involving youth.

The work of the Social Exclusion Unit in Britain in this regard has been impressive. They focus on groups like the hardest-to-reach families, or people leaving care, or the homeless, and have brought a focus to these groups that is otherwise lost in efforts to deal with larger groups of disadvantaged people. Without this kind of focus, and the resulting governmental and public attention, there is every likelihood that these groups will not be reached. Having this responsibility lodged within the secretariat will keep it in contact with issues and groups that may not yet be part of most ministries' plans, and will help position the secretariat for a leadership as well as policy and management roles on the roots agenda.

Additional Governance Instruments

In addition to these core governance mechanisms, there are other proven measures that can be brought to bear on the complex task of advancing a sustained agenda to address the roots of violence involving youth. We will briefly outline in the following sections those that strike us as the most pertinent to our issues.

i) Impact Analyses

One well-known measure both in Ontario and other jurisdictions is the impact analysis. While this can take various forms, in the context of driving a cross-government response to the roots of violence involving youth it would require ministries bringing forward proposals, whether for policy approval or for financial approval, to provide a statement of how their proposals would affect progress on the specific roots agenda adopted by Cabinet. This requirement would apply regardless of whether the submission were focused on youth, and regardless of whether it was to be considered by the Cabinet Committee on Social Inclusion and Anti-Racism, some other committee of Cabinet or Cabinet itself.

Both positive and negative impacts would have to be identified, and where there were no impacts, the question of whether the policy could be modified to support the roots agenda would also have to be addressed. To the same end, where there were negative effects, a further statement of how the policy could be changed to remove or ameliorate them and, just as importantly, to create positive ones, would have to be included along with an articulation of any trade-offs involved.

In our experience, two matters are essential if these impact analyses are to be taken seriously and are to provide meaningful assistance with governance. First, there cannot be too many impacts to identify, or else the exercise risks becoming either too detailed to manage, or simply formulistic. We want the analyses to be a serious, credible and important part of all submissions to Cabinet and all of its committees. A short mandatory list supports this. We think that impact analyses should address the impact, or potential to have an impact, on the approved outcome goals for:

- Strengthening communities, particularly the disadvantaged neighbourhoods
- Concentrations and circumstances of poverty
- The anti-racism agenda, and
- Youth involvement and engagement.

As well, if an initiative involves contracting with agencies for services, the impact statements should address the issues of whether funding and delivery alignment have been considered and whether the likely agency bidders have the capacity to deliver and sustain the initiative in question.

The second key to impact statements being of value is to ensure that there is an expert body that can offer advice to those preparing them and provide an assessment of them to Cabinet and its committees. We believe that the proposed new secretariat should assume this function. It should be responsible for ensuring that a dialogue is opened on the roots agenda whenever proposals are brought forward for policy or funding approval. This would apply regardless of whether a submission was going to the Cabinet Committee on Social Inclusion and Anti-Racism and, indeed, could be most needed for those that were not.

We chose the word "dialogue" with care. The interactions with the secretariat should not be seen as a negative or confrontational process. Instead, the requirement to provide the analyses can and should be seen as an opportunity to spark the kinds of discussions that can lead to ways to advance the roots agenda without impeding progress on the particular initiative being advanced. Indeed, assuming that the government's commitment to that agenda is strong and understood to be so, finding such synergies will soon be seen as a way to secure support for initiatives and will become a self-directed operational norm right across the government.

ii) Performance Contracts

We also believe that contributing to the outcomes and targets that Cabinet sets for the roots agenda should be in the performance contracts of deputy ministers and, through them, those of their senior officials. Performance contracts set out key objectives and deliverables for senior public servants and generally tie a portion of their compensation to meeting the agreed-upon deliverables. While we do not expect money to be the major motivator here, we do believe that the professionalism and sense of pride of senior public servants will cause them to give particular priority to objectives they have agreed to in formal contracts.

iii) Public Reporting

In Chapter 10 we address the importance of setting outcome measures and annual targets. We mention the approach here because of its value as a governance instrument. We note that Ontario is moving towards public targets in some areas (health care wait times, high school graduation rates and the Attorney General's court-delay-reduction announcement being current examples) and seek to build on that work.

Outcome measures and targets are clearly useful for internal governance purposes, but they take on an added dimension when they are routinely made public. First, the publication allows public input into whether the measures and targets are appropriate. This is essential for targets based in specific neighbourhoods, but it is also important for broader targets. Opening a discussion around outcomes and targets helps promote an understanding of them and brings to bear expertise and experience that might otherwise be missed. Where this leads to a broad consensus around them, they will have enhanced credibility and there will be more motivation to coordinate and collaborate to meet them.

Second, and perhaps more importantly, when both the targets and the progress towards them are made public, there is an incentive to meet the targets, or to have a very good reason for not doing so. This is not just a way to put pressure on an individual ministry, though that may be a useful way to promote its adherence to the targets. The targets we contemplate would be corporate commitments, and a shortage of funding or of the collaboration required to meet them would fall at the feet of the government as a whole, not just affect an individual ministry. Ensuring that results are published can therefore play a significant role in the governance of the roots agenda, as it promotes the "whole of government" approach, which is at the core of how the roots must be addressed, and at the same time encourages ministries to cooperate and work towards the targets without constant internal oversight.

We believe that the outcome measures and annual targets should be released as soon as Cabinet approves them. The secretariat should then be responsible for preparing the annual reports on progress towards those targets. The Cabinet committee, with the input of the advisory council, would be responsible for ensuring that the reports provide a comprehensive, clear and fair assessment of progress before being released.

iv) Joint Ministry Work

All of the above mechanisms will play a significant role in creating alignments and synergies across the existing ministry structures to drive progress on addressing the roots of violence involving youth. We of course also thought about whether those structures needed to be reformed to advance that goal. Although there are interesting initiatives elsewhere, including the recent decision in Britain to combine in one ministry the responsibilities for schools, children and families, we decided not to comment on the structure of Ontario's ministries.

Our reason for this is quite straightforward. Action on the roots agenda is needed now and it is needed urgently. Significant ministry realignments not only take time and energy to plan, but inevitably lead to substantive work being sidelined. It gives way to realigning responsibilities, building new teams, recruiting for new positions, and reestablishing relationships with stakeholders and with the rest of the public service, to name just a few of the inevitable complications. We believe that getting on with substantive change must be the priority and that any ministerial realignments should follow the building up of significant experience with the new, coordinated approach to this issue. In that way, not only is early progress facilitated, but also any realignment will be informed by the issues that have been encountered on the ground and by the collaboration with other governments we discuss in the next part.

While we are not proposing any ministerial realignments, we do feel it is important in the short run that ministries make two changes in how they operate. The first is to adopt public service agreements for a limited number of cross-ministry initiatives; the other is to establish a small number of joint policy units or advisory boards.

(a) Public Service Agreements

This concept comes to us from Britain, where it is a core part of how the entire governance structure works in that country. For reasons similar to those that led us away from proposing changes to the ministerial structure here, we are in no way suggesting that Ontario adopt a similar approach across all of its operations, or even for the entirety of its agenda to address the roots of violence involving youth. But we do feel that there is value in adopting it in certain key areas where there is a particular need to drive collaborative work if results are to be achieved.

In Britain, public service agreements (PSAs) are documents in which two or more ministries set down in writing, and publish, the shared goals they are committed to achieving, and how they are going to go about achieving them. This includes specifying the partners they will work with and support to that end. As described by the Institute On Governance, in Britain PSAs have the following characteristics:

> Each PSA consists of a vision, performance indicators and the delivery strategy indicating delivery partners, priority actions, and accountability and governance....A lead minister is nominated for each PSA and the relevant Cabinet committee(s) monitors progress, holds departments and programs to account and resolves interdepartmental disputes where they arise. A PSA delivery board of senior officials comprised of all lead and supporting departments is also established which monitors progress and reviews delivery regularly. Each Department remains responsible for developing and meeting its Departmental Strategic Objectives covering the full breadth of its work (Institute On Governance, Volume 4: 438)

In Britain, the PSAs also drive further coordination at the local authority level, but that is not germane to our present analysis. Instead, what attracts us to PSAs for some of the roots issues is the fact that they require ministries to plan in advance, and commit to writing, the outcomes they will seek to achieve together, the methods by which they will achieve them, what other entities they will work with and how progress will be measured. The fact that these become public documents adds rigour to these exercises. As in Britain, we would see the PSAs needing to be approved by Cabinet, thus ensuring that they are indeed designed to achieve key corporate objectives, and also that they have the backing of the government as a whole. Funding allocations and also support from other ministries should then follow more easily, given this endorsement.

We therefore see the PSAs as being important ways to make concrete the measures that specific groupings of ministries must take together to achieve certain key outcomes. Without being definitive, we see these as potentially involving agreements on the operation of Ontario's youth justice system; methods to reduce concentrations of poverty; youth development, including training, education and engagement; youth well-being and safety, including mental health; and support for the community hubs.

(b) Cross-Ministry Units

As noted, we have resisted the temptation to propose a lot of new bodies and structures in favour of reliance on the kind of alignment measures discussed above. We do, though, believe that there is room within Ontario's governance structure for a limited number of joint bodies, both internal to and external from government.

An example of an external body would be the Youth Justice Advisory Board discussed in Pillar 1. We think that a highly credible external board, reporting jointly to the three justice ministries, could bring valuable coordinated thinking and objective analyses to how Ontario's youth justice sector is managed.

An example of an internal joint unit might be one in which the critical issue of developing a response to systemic racism in the youth justice system and the criminal justice system was made the responsibility of an internal unit reporting to all three justice ministries. This unit would be responsible for bringing forward a coordinated response to the issue to ensure a seamless approach from the point of first contact with a police officer through to transition back into the community. Other joint units might be considered to develop provincial policies around supports for community hubs, ways to integrate youth mental health services into these hubs and other community settings, and ways to improve conditions in both public- and private-sector housing.

(v) A Lead Ministry for Building Communities

Pillar 3 proposed a broad strategy to build communities to advance the roots agenda. While much of the work to achieve that goal will be driven by the overall governance mechanisms outlined above, we believe that there needs to be a central point of contact within the provincial government for those doing that work. There also needs to be a clear responsibility for funding the Neighbourhood Strategic Partnerships and bringing the Province to those tables, as well as disseminating lessons learned, positive community stories and best practices.

We considered whether that could be done by the social inclusion and anti-racism secretariat. Our advice is against that approach, as the highly transactional nature of much of the day-to-day work is inconsistent with the more strategic focus of the secretariat. On balance, we believe that the ministry designated to lead the community building exercise would be best placed to carry out this function and the other responsibilities outlined in Pillar 3.

Towards New Relationships With Governments and Communities

In this section, we move to a discussion of the other two governance elements we consider essential to advance progress on the roots agenda. The first is the creation of both the structures and the relationships that permit the coordination of the relevant activities of the three orders of government, with an initial emphasis on work with the municipalities. The second is working with municipal governments to bring communities into the governance framework in meaningful ways as a core part of building new governance relationships.

The discussion in this section is premised on the provincial government having first put in place the alignment structures we have identified above, as without them any increased coordination at the local or federal levels will founder on the silos of Ontario's own government.

The Primacy of Provincial Responsibility

There is no doubt that the number and complexity of the issues involved in addressing the roots of violence involving youth, together with the degree of local specificity and the extent of local expertise, make it highly advisable that the Province work hard to promote effective and leveraged efforts with other orders of government, communities and agencies. Before addressing in this section how we believe that might best be done, we must first make clear our view that the desirability of that goal does not supersede the fundamental responsibility of the provincial government to deliver an effective agenda to address the very serious issues outlined in this report.

We say this not to take away from the value of collaboration, but because experience indicates that there is always a high risk that calling for it will launch a well-intentioned but complex, resource-intensive and slow process of intergovernmental negotiations. We accordingly want to stress that, in pursing collaboration, the Province must not sacrifice the actions it can take or the initiatives that are within its power to deliver. It should pursue collaborative arrangements, but not at the expense of failing to do everything it can within its own powers to make this a safer and stronger province.

As outlined in Pillar 3, we base this on our belief that the Province has the ultimate accountability for addressing the roots of violence involving youth, and the responsibility to create a safe province with meaningful opportunity for all. We also believe that it has the powers needed to do so. Acting alone, if necessary, the Province can advance income security, equity, health, education, a more responsive justice system, strong communities and, indeed, most of what is required for sustained progress on all of the issues we have identified in this report as central to addressing the roots of violence involving youth.

In our view, notwithstanding the many advantages of collaboration, the Province must move vigorously to accomplish everything it can do on its own if collaboration cannot reasonably be obtained. In doing so, the Province should of course always value and seek cooperation with other governments, and even in its absence act in a way that respects the existing leadership and knowledge that reside there, especially at the municipal level. It should also always act in a way that builds community partnerships wherever possible and that leaves space for and encourages other governments to come to the table.

A Municipal Focus

It strikes us as particularly important that the Province not spend time seeking a comprehensive agreement with the federal government on addressing the roots of violence involving youth. There is no doubt that the federal government should play a major resourcing role in addressing this issue and that the Province should be more vocal in its expectation that the federal government become much more active in this area. The most obvious examples of where more should be expected from the federal government are immigration settlement, employment insurance, child care, housing and youth employment. Progress has been made with intergovernmental cooperation and agreements in some of these areas, and further progress should be sought there and in other areas as opportunities occur. We do not, though, see in the present climate much potential for a broad federal-provincial agreement to address the roots of violence involving youth.

We accordingly believe that, while the Province should pursue federal cooperation in the course of its ongoing business, the priority for seeking intergovernmental collaboration within the proposed governance framework should be with the municipalities. For reasons we will go on to discuss, we also believe that the major focus and locus for building that collaboration should be in the disadvantaged neighbourhoods discussed in Chapter 7. We believe that this focus will give priority to early action and local impacts over intergovernmental negotiations. It will favour achievements over structures and will create a platform and an incentive for the federal government to bring its ideas and resources to the table.

We will accordingly focus most of our analysis on building collaborative structures with municipalities in the disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

Building Collaboration With Municipalities and Communities in Disadvantaged Neighbourhoods

i) Rationale and Approach

Collaboration with the regional governments and municipalities is paramount. This is due to the highly local nature of what has to be done, the knowledge municipalities have about their communities and what works on the ground, and the leadership many have already demonstrated on issues related to the roots of violence involving youth. The challenge is how to create and sustain that collaboration on matters central to addressing the roots agenda. Getting caught up in, or undercutting, the work to restructure the provincial-municipal relationship more broadly, or embarking on yet another complex and time-consuming process of structural negotiations with the large number of highly diverse municipal governments in Ontario must be avoided.

In the result, our advice is to combine the second and third aspects of our governance model by focusing on working with municipalities in and for the identified priority neighbourhoods. In this approach, the neighbourhood becomes the place where the provincial-municipal relationship on roots issues is built, not the place it is rolled out after having been negotiated somewhere else. In this approach, residents and local service providers are inside the governance model at the outset and integral to how it is built and operated. This approach will make sure that results flow early, with any structural agreements to anchor the local work made as needed, being tailored to local reality and forged from practical experience. Agreements, where required, would follow experience rather than preceding it.

This approach builds on the discussion in Chapter 7 and earlier in this chapter about the importance and value of focusing program and policy initiatives in the most disadvantaged neighborhoods in the province. Chapter 7 also outlined a methodology to identify those neighbourhoods in conjunction with the municipalities. Among the many benefits of this approach are that it allows the Province (and other partners as well) to increase the return on investments by putting resources where they are most needed and by drawing on local knowledge and strengths. To these, we would add that it creates a natural forum for collaboration.

We expect that the proposal in Chapter 7 will lead to the identification of about 50-60 priority neighbourhoods across the province. The City of Toronto, using a more comprehensive approach than is possible provincewide at the moment, has already identified and undertaken important groundbreaking work in 13 such neighbourhoods. These should be the foundation of the Province's place-based work there, as should any other defined, disadvantaged neighbourhoods in which other municipalities are already focusing work to address the roots of violence involving youth.

Within all of these neighbourhoods, the Province should, as a governance initiative, work closely with the municipality to engage with residents and service providers in ways that build community strengths and a provincial-municipal-community culture of collaboration. This work must, of course, be done with great care to understand what is in place and working already in priority neighbourhoods. As Britain's former Cabinet secretary, who had been at the heart of the neighbourhood renewal strategy there, reminded us when we met, a number of past initiatives have foundered because their architects paid too little attention to what was already in place when they launched them. The neighbourhood action teams and partnerships in Toronto are a clear example, but there are other less visible and less well-supported community strengths that should be respected and built on across the province in new initiatives of this kind.

ii) Our Proposal

Based on the above premises, the core of our proposal is that the Province and municipal governments should come together with local agencies and community members in a partnership in each identified neighbourhood. They would do this by forming a Neighbourhood Strategic Partnership (NSP), modelled in part on Britain's Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs), and in part on the City of Toronto's neighbourhood action teams and partnerships. We will briefly provide background on each of those sources for our proposal, then turn to the role we see the NSPs playing.

a) Lessons from the Local Strategic Partnerships

In Britain, the LSPs play an important role in bringing together local and national government with key service providers, including the health service, the police and the fire service, as well as business, voluntary and community organizations. As one community activist we met described his LSP, it brought everyone to the table that the community wanted to talk to and allowed all of the key issues to be discussed at one table.

The initial concept of the LSPs was set out in the *National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal*, published in 2001. It proposed that the public, private, voluntary and community sectors come together in a single overarching local coordination framework, which would enable priorities to be set and services to be aligned, bring those who deliver or commission different services together with those who receive the services and ensure that other local partnerships know how they fit into the wider picture. The LSPs were seen as also having a role to go beyond neighborhood renewal, for example, preparing community strategies (Social Exclusion Unit, 2001: 28).

The core functions fulfilled by the LSPs in their first years of operations were described in the report by the Institute On Governance in the following terms:

> [To] identify the needs of the local community and reconcile competing interests; to oversee and coordinate the community consultation and engagement activities of individual partners; to produce a Sustainable Community Strategy including a shared local vision and priorities for action; ...to oversee the planning and alignment of resources in the locality — each partner remains accountable for its decision taken in relation to funding streams allocated to it; to review and performance-manage progress against priorities and targets (Institute On Governance, Volume 4: 449).

The LSPs in Britain operate at the level of the entire local authority and are not constituted specifically in the disadvantaged neighbourhoods. However, they have a vital role with respect to those neighbourhoods. We were advised during our meetings in London that the task of the LSPs in these areas was to:

> ...find the root causes of neighborhood decline, develop ideas on how organizations and individuals can improve things, and implement agreed upon actions. [They...also]...set local targets for improving outcomes in deprived neighborhoods...[and] provide a means to allow partners to link existing local partnerships and plans, bringing strategic functions together. Having an LSP in place [was] a condition of receiving [neighborhood renewal] funding. .. (Social Exclusion Unit, 2001: 28).

It is important, though, to stress that we are not proposing the adoption of the entire LSP concept. Indeed, LSPs now play a significant role in the negotiation of the local authority's overall funding from the national government. They have the lead responsibility to negotiate Local Area Agreements, which are the mechanism through which the national government flows its funding of local authorities. As that funding can constitute in the range of 50 per cent of local authority budgets, the role and influence of the LSPs cannot be underestimated. By contrast, we do not see our Neighbourhood Strategic Partnerships as being involved across the whole of a municipality, nor as becoming involved in the whole provincial-municipal relationship. Our focus is on the roots of violence involving youth, and our interest in LSPs is focused on the vital governance role they can play on that issue, specifically in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

We draw upon the concept of the LSPs because of the way they bring together community members, service providers and both levels of government, and because of their role in developing community-specific plans. With relatively modest staff resources, they play a vital and vibrant role in many communities. We visited one in Tower Hamlets in London and were given a striking glimpse of what a community organization, with strong support from the local authority, can achieve by way of direct community involvement in governance.

Our meeting there took place in a police station, part of which had been dedicated to use by the community and was clearly a place people felt comfortable using. The partnership, with representatives from health, education, policing and community agencies and residents, had created a 10-year plan in 2001 and was now developing its second one. They had divided the borough into 10 planning areas, each with a strategic committee to identify local priorities.

Interestingly, each local planning committee has its own funding to spend on local priorities; roughly 25 per cent of the borough's neighbourhood renewal funding is given over to their control. The community members of those local committees were, in turn, the source of community representation on the LSP, ensuring effective grassroots representation on the more senior body.

We found that the LSP and the local planning committees were involved in a wide array of issues. They were dealing with crime prevention, finding housing for ex-offenders, working with youth identified as being on the verge of criminality, creating mechanisms to keep schools open to address the needs of local families and youth, looking for ways to improve access to doctors and reduce smoking, improve job training, day care access and the number of local businesses — the list goes on from there. The fact that this breadth of activity had been maintained for the better part of a decade, with progress tracked regularly against clear targets and enthusiasm to meet them remaining high, showed us the power of this concept.

b) Lessons From the Neighbourhood Action Teams and Partnerships

Another leading example of neighbourhood-based governance initiatives is the Neighborhood Action Teams, which the City of Toronto has established in its priority neighborhoods. These were discussed in some detail in Chapter 7. They bring together at local tables a number of core parts of the city government, including economic development, children's services, parks, city planning, shelter support and housing, social development, as well as the Toronto Community Housing Corporation, the Toronto Police Service, Toronto Public Health and Toronto Public Libraries.

The initial purpose of these teams was to ensure cross-divisional knowledge leading to better horizontal needs-identification, service planning and city service delivery at the neighborhood level. In this phase, officials in each of the neighborhoods worked together to identify existing services and service gaps, as well as priorities and desired outcomes. In the next phase, now underway, broader community stakeholders are being brought to the table. City officials have stressed to us that, in addition to the powerful role these teams are playing in the neighbourhoods, they have served to drive new levels of alignment and coordination at city hall. The teams have played an important role in allowing the city to cut through its own silos, and we believe that working in Neighbourhood Strategic Partnerships would do the same for the Province.

c) Our Proposal for Neighbourhood Strategic Partnerships

We believe that partnerships broadly similar to the local strategic partnerships should be established in each priority neighbourhood in Ontario. They should be anchored in representation from the provincial and municipal governments, and should also draw together the service providers in each neighbourhood and a number of community representatives. The federal government should be encouraged to take a seat at these tables and to play a significant role at them. The process we propose in Pillar 3 for helping the community to organize may initially bring forward the most appropriate community members, but in time the communities may well come up with their own means to select them.

The structure of these partnerships need not be and probably should not be identical across the province, but rather should be responsive to local circumstances, particularly pre-existing coordination bodies. The core idea of "bringing into one room everyone the community wants to talk to," for our purposes to talk about roots issues, and providing a table where all of the relevant issues can be discussed, should nonetheless generally guide how the partnership is structured in each neighbourhood.

We see these partnerships being responsible for developing a local plan to address the roots of violence involving youth. They will need some resources to do so, which for the reasons we set out in Pillar 3 in our discussion of a declaration of provincial interest, we believe should be provided by the Province. These reasons focus on the provincial responsibility for safety and the need to address local roots to assure that safety provincewide, and on the centrality to that goal of many of the policy and funding levers the Province has.

As part of the work to develop the plan, we would expect that each NSP would map the services being provided to their residents if that had not already been done. This exercise has two elements: determine which services are provided in the area and also the extent to which they are actually accessible to the most disadvantaged of those for whom they are intended. The exercise would then go on to identify gaps, and priorities for addressing them.

Assuming that the youth policy framework proposed in Pillar 2 is developed and includes specific outcome measures, each NSP should be asked to focus its plan on ways to achieve those measures locally. What is important here is that, while the outcomes and floor targets would be set provincially, both the plans and the means to achieve them would be locally determined. For example, if one outcome goal is a minimum percentage of high school graduates, the local measures could vary from English as a Second Language programs to immigrant settlement services, and from homework clubs to parental involvement programs, depending on local needs. The goal remains the same, but the method is adapted to local circumstances.

The outcomes-planning exercise in each neighbourhood would start with collecting local baseline data for each outcome. In some instances, that data could show that the neighbourhood is at or above the floor target. That may not mean that the issue is set aside, as it still may be a local priority to advance progress further. But where the neighbourhood indicators fell below the floor target, the partnership would be expected, and supported, to prepare a plan on how to reach the objective. The plan would identify the time frame required, the means to be employed and the partners to be engaged. That plan should be widely available within the neighbourhood, as should regular reports on progress.

Once the NSP had come to agreement about methods and annual targets, it would then be incumbent on the service providers and governments, as partners in the NSP, to work together to prioritize and align their programs and funding to make that plan work. This would have the obvious benefit of promoting collaborative governance in the field, but as Toronto's experience shows, also would have a powerful impact on countering silos within governments. For the Province, the internal alignment measures we propose, along with the public commitment to meeting the outcome targets provincewide, should already be achieving this, but those alignment measures would be strongly supported by the pressure for alignment being driven up from these partnerships. Similarly, the municipality, having endorsed this process and been at the partnership table, would also have a strong incentive to align its efforts and resources to help meet the targets.

The NSPs would be free to work on issues outside the roots agenda to further strengthen the community. Our particular focus on the roots agenda calls us to place that at the core of the NSPs and to call on the Province to underwrite the required work to that end, but does not preclude a wider approach to community needs and interests.

We see the NSPs as being key players in building the hubs we propose in Pillar 3 and helping ensure that the services and activities offered there are responsive to community needs as expressed in the community plan. On the assumption that the resident engagement workers discussed in Pillar 3 will be represented on the NSP, we are confident that the NSP will ensure that the hub provides space for community-cohesion activities as well as for services.

Whether to support and build hubs, align services, advance progress towards outcome goals or promote other community priorities, the essence of this approach is that neighbourhoods develop plans with governments, which governments then work to help them achieve. The alignment mechanisms we have proposed, including clear provincial targets and commitments and the public service agreements and the other mechanisms discussed above, are all designed to ensure a sustained and committed focus on these plans as they emerge. As well, we believe that the Province's own planning will be powerfully informed by what it learns by working in these communities, ensuring a strong two-way partnership for policy development as well as service delivery.

Larger-Scale Collaboration

For all of the reasons set out above, our priority is on building collaborative governance at the local level through the NSPs. We nonetheless recognize that there are some roots issues that could benefit from coordination and elaboration on a larger scale than the disadvantaged neighbourhoods. These include the planning issues around fostering economically integrated and well-serviced neighbourhoods, transportation, youth engagement and economic opportunity, the justice system and various programs and supports for families, including mental health services.

We considered whether an additional structure was needed to support this larger-scale collaboration and concluded that it is not, for a number of reasons. First, we believe that the alignment mechanisms we have proposed for the Province will require all ministries to take the roots agenda into account in these larger-scale initiatives and drive collaborative work on them at the provincial level. At the same time, the provincial commitment to outcome goals will lead to an emphasis on doing the collaborative work required to achieve them in all areas and to work with other governments to that end.

Similarly, we believe that the municipal focus on the roots issues at the NSP tables will drive alignment on the roots agenda at the municipal level, as the Toronto experience has already demonstrated, and lead to a desire to collaborate with the other orders of government.

These inherent alignment pressures should mean that new structural mechanisms are unnecessary to bring governments together on the roots agenda. As well, as we have noted above in related contexts, the complexity of negotiating broad agreements encompassing numerous municipalities on the many issues relevant to the roots agenda would in all likelihood materially impede real progress on the many core issues.

We believe that if the Province and the municipalities, and ideally the federal government as well, start their collaboration on the roots agenda at the neighbourhood level they will address the most pressing needs and also begin to develop better working relationships on the ground. It seems to us that on the basis of those relationships, and experience in these communities, they will know better whether a broader structure is necessary, and will be better placed to achieve it if it is. We also think the structure, if needed, will be a better one if brokered through experience in working together as a body involving service providers and community members.

We do not, therefore, propose a larger-scale governance structure, but we do believe that the centre of excellence proposed under Pillar 3 could provide many of the possible benefits of a larger structure without imposing a new level of governance. That centre's functions will include assessing progress on major initiatives within the roots agenda. In addition, it could be asked to monitor and report on the work of the NSPs.

For example, it could identify systemic issues or barriers arising at the partnership tables, serve as a clearing house for best practices and core learnings that emerge from those tables and provide ongoing advice to the NSPs and the governments on their work. It could allow the lessons learned on the ground to influence the broader governance relationship, as well as the development of the NSP model, and could serve as a conduit for the information and analysis required at all levels to sustain and advance the concept. It could, in essence, facilitate an ongoing conversation to advance this important part of the governance agenda.

For all of these reasons, we do not see a need at present for a new structural relationship among orders of government. We instead encourage governments to focus their energies in local partnerships with communities to advance the work that must be done to make this a province of safety and opportunity for all.

Buttressing the Pillars:
Two Related Issues

A Community Approach to Individual Interventions

Our report focuses on the roots of the immediate risk factors for violence involving youth. However, as we noted in the introduction to this chapter, we consider it appropriate to offer some thoughts on complementary approaches to the youth who have grown up with those roots and are displaying some of the immediate risk factors, including alienation, no sense of hope or belonging, low self-esteem, limited empathy, a sense of oppression and no way to be heard.

We note at the outset that we are not attempting to provide a definitive analysis of all of the different programs and initiatives that exist to deal with youth who are experiencing the immediate risk factors. In Chapter 8, we set out what the evaluation literature tells us about some of the intervention programs. Here, relying largely on the work of our chief researcher, Prof. Scot Wortley, we want to simply outline a community-based strategy that we find promising as a way to anchor intervention initiatives and strategies and to magnify their positive impacts on youth.

The youth we consider in this section are those who have been identified by the police and become involved in the youth or adult criminal justice systems and those who are engaged in "risky" or "dangerous" behaviours, but have not yet been formally labelled as a criminal offender. In this section, we also pay special attention to the youth who are affiliated with street gangs. Recent research suggests that street gangs are a growing phenomenon in Ontario and that gang-involved youth are especially vulnerable to serious violence, both as offenders and victims (Wortley and Tanner, 2007; Chettleburgh, 2007, cited in Wortley et al., Volume 5).

There are two main intervention approaches that can be taken to deal with street gangs and other youth we are concerned about in this section. The first involves the targeting of individual youth. This philosophy is represented in the structure of most current crime prevention programs and crime suppression strategies. The idea is that we can change society one youth at a time through the processes of deterrence and individualized treatment regimes. We were advised, however, that the research evidence suggests that this individual orientation is having very little impact on the size of the problem.

The second approach to violence prevention locates the more proximate risks of youth violence in local communities. A local community might be defined as a block, a neighbourhood, a housing project or an ethnic enclave. We agree with those who believe that the most promising and durable solutions to youth violence are to be found within our communities.

In the balance of this section, we outline a community strategy for dealing with youthful offenders in Ontario. This strategy calls for significant community involvement in six major activities: prevention, intervention, targeted law enforcement, sentencing, rehabilitation and community reintegration.

Prevention

In addition to strategies to address the roots of violence involving youth, which can be seen as a form of prevention, it is also necessary to identify specific children from a community (typically from seven to 14 years of age) at particularly high risk of engaging in criminal or violent behaviour in the future. After being identified, these youth can be provided with additional services including intensive mental health counselling, behavioural modification, family therapy and adult mentorship. Many of these programs have been discussed in earlier chapters of this report. We understand that the effective delivery of these services, in the local community, can help ensure that childhood problem behaviours do not evolve into serious delinquency or gang activity.

To that end, the community hubs we propose in Pillar 3 can play a crucial role. They can anchor a "one-stop" resource centre in the community. This centre would be responsible for making prevention services known to all community members through creative and culturally specific outreach, for identifying the needs of specific individuals and families and for delivering culturally relevant services in an efficient manner that is consistent with the "best practices" literature. Without such a centre to organize and coordinate service delivery, there is a heightened potential for program fragmentation and duplication and for barriers to access by those who most need the services. Ultimately, this can dramatically increase program costs and reduce program effectiveness.

Intervention

Intervention strategies target older youth (typically 14–24 years of age) who are actively engaged in gang activity, youth who are known to associate or affiliate with local gang members and other youth who are currently experimenting with different types of violent or criminal behaviour (in the balance of this section we use the term "youthful offender" to describe those youth). Intervention strategies attempt to reach these youth before they become involved in the formal criminal justice system. These youth may be first identified by teachers, parents, the police, social workers, community leaders, youth outreach workers or other local individuals who have intimate knowledge of the young people and the street gangs within a specific community. Once identified, these youth are the subject of intensive outreach to bring them to the available services.

These youth are then provided with a treatment regime that meets their individual needs. Individualized treatment regimes can include special gang exiting programs (see our discussion of the Breaking the Cycle program in Chapter 8 of this report). They can also include specific rehabilitation strategies (i.e., anger-management or life skills training), educational assistance, adult mentoring, job or career training, youth employment, or structured sports, recreation or arts activities.

The major objectives of these intensive, holistic intervention strategies typically include providing youth with social activities and positive peer group influences that can lure them away from the negative influences present in their neighbourhood, including street gangs; a way to help youth engage with mainstream institutions and pro-social role models; and support services for youth and their families that can encourage young people to make positive life choices.

Targeted Law Enforcement

Targeted law enforcement activities target those youth in a community who are consistently involved in serious violent or criminal activity and thus represent a threat to community safety and cohesion. It is often argued that, without first dealing with the most violent individuals from a community, prevention and intervention strategies will be less than successful. Targeted law enforcement efforts, therefore, often focus on identifying the most dangerous and influential gang members or other youth. We include this approach here only in the context of an integrated intervention strategy of which it is but one element.

Targeted law enforcement activities typically involve tactics that go beyond regular police patrol practices. They include the implementation of dedicated guns and gangs units, special task forces that coordinate the gang-related activities of different police services, specific anti-violence units that attempt to disrupt weapons use and gang activity at the street level, and dedicated prosecution teams that are focused on increasing the conviction rate for gang-related crime. The success of these activities most often depends on the development of a deep understanding of local gang cultures and structures in communities.

Without question, the cooperation and involvement of local community members is crucial to the development of this knowledge base. That is why we emphasized in Pillar 1 the need to be strategic when these measures are deployed in a community. The overall approach may need to be aggressive in some instances, but the treatment of the youth in question, and the community, must take into account the long-term consequences if the tactics employed smack of racism or are belittling in ways that lead the community to believe that there is little point, and often some risk, in cooperating with the police. We outlined in Pillar 1 the ways in which that unfortunate result can ensue.

As a result, great care must be taken to keep the community on side in these exercises. Part of this involves an emphasis on civility and the minimum degree of force and disruption consistent with operational imperatives. But part of it also involves mechanisms to bring the community on side after a major enforcement exercise has taken place. This means having good connections in the community and good relationships with service providers who can intensify services and supports after a major enforcement action.

It seems to us that the Province and the municipalities could usefully consider making available a fund to facilitate this. That fund could support crisis counselling for youth and families who may have been traumatized by the enforcement exercise. The fund could also permit an immediate boost to key programs and activities in a community where police action has taken place. The boost to community programs and services would serve two purposes. First, the community would see immediate positive consequences following the police action, and might be more inclined to cooperate with the police as a result. And second, the increased activity in the community and on the streets could help the community take back its parks and streets before a new gang starts up to fill the vacuum created by the enforcement action.

Sentencing

We discussed in Pillar 1 some of the issues that arise when youth are incarcerated. We noted there that this is nonetheless the right sanction for some offences, especially those of serious violence. But we also believe that, in appropriate cases, consideration must be given to increasing the involvement of the community in the sanctioning process. Such involvement can, in many instances, not only make the sanction more effective, but can also lay the groundwork for the community networks and supports that will be needed to prevent reoffending when the sanction ends.

Restorative justice is one well-recognized means to this end. Under restorative justice principles, both the victim and the offender, and those assisting them, meet with criminal justice officials and community leaders to develop a sentencing plan. The victim has the opportunity to discuss the pain caused by their victimization, while the offender has the opportunity to explain their situation and apologize for the suffering they caused. The restorative justice committee, including the victim and offender, then comes to a conclusion with respect to the type of punishment the offender deserves. Community members also become involved in the delivery of this sanction (unless the offender is sentenced to a period of incarceration) and the reintegration of the offender back into the community once the sentence has been served.

Restorative justice reflects the philosophy that because crime and violence hurts victims, offenders and entire communities, justice should heal, and especially should heal relationships. It is a democratic process in which all stakeholders have an opportunity to discuss the damage caused by crime, how this damage can be repaired, how the recurrence of crime might be prevented and how the needs of all community stakeholders might be met.

Following the 2000 United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and Treatment of Offenders, in 2002, the UN Economic and Social Council adopted a resolution encouraging all nations to use the UN's basic principles to develop and implement restorative justice programs. In recent years, even countries with the highest imprisonment rates in the world — the United States, China, Russia and South Africa — have produced important criminal justice innovations that are consistent with restorative justice principles. In Ontario, the implementation of many regional youth justice committees is evidence that the restorative justice philosophy is also being taken seriously by the provincial government. We believe that linking this work to the community hubs and Neighbourhood Strategic Partnerships we propose would encourage and facilitate the extension of this approach to more Ontario communities.

Rehabilitation

Many people feel that youth crime and violence could be reduced if we would only dramatically increase the severity of criminal sanctions. However, we were advised that thousands of criminological studies suggest that harsh punishment does not deter young people from engaging in criminal activity (Wortley et al.,Volume 5). The severity of punishment, in fact, appears to be a particularly ineffective strategy for young offenders. Many young people simply have not yet reached the level of maturity required to recognize the long-term consequences of their actions. A large percentage of young people are impulsive or are only focused on immediate gratification and cannot, therefore, conceptualize being caught and punished for their criminal behaviour.

As well, we discussed in Pillar 1 the ways in which a harsh sanction can increase the risks of future violence. These include self-stigmatization and stigmatization by others, learning crime skills and being recruited by gangs when in jails, and the likelihood of leaving jail with increased alienation and decreased hopes and prospects.

We maintain that Ontario should reserve harsh sanctions for cases where the need to protect society in the short run outweighs the potential longer-term consequences. To help minimize those consequences where custody is called for, we should not abandon these youth. Indeed, a large body of research suggests that even the most violent youth can be rehabilitated and re-enter society as productive citizens (Loeber and Farrington, 1998; Cullen, 2007, cited in Wortley et al., Volume 5).

The research literature suggests that properly delivered rehabilitation services — especially those based on cognitive behavioural therapy — can dramatically reduce recidivism rates. In other words, youthful offenders who receive high-quality rehabilitation services are much less likely to reoffend than youthful offenders who are punished without receiving proper treatment. In order to maximize effectiveness, treatment must first identify and target individual needs. Programs also need to be intensive and be delivered over an extended period of time.

Unfortunately, it appears that, within the Canadian criminal justice system, many offenders do not receive the treatment they require. Prof. Wortley's research suggests, for example, that only two per cent of Corrections Canada's $1.8-billion budget is devoted to the delivery of core rehabilitation services (including anger-management training, cognitive-skills training, sex-offender treatment and substance abuse treatment). As a result, waiting lists for treatment within federal correctional facilities are long. In fact, many inmates, especially those serving relatively short sentences, either never get the opportunity to receive treatment or never get the opportunity to complete the rehabilitation programs that they begin. We were not able to obtain corresponding figures for the provincial corrections system, but the even shorter sentences served there suggest that the issue would not be much different.

Long waiting lists for treatment within correctional facilities and low program-completion rates in prison are two reasons that we think rehabilitation services should be extended beyond prison walls. A third is that services for those who do receive them typically are cut off once the incarceration period is over. Research also suggests that rehabilitation programming may actually be more effective when it is delivered in the community rather than a prison (MacKenzie, 2002, cited in Worley et al., Volume 5).

In our opinion, it is crucial that proper rehabilitation services be expanded within the prison system, extended to those serving sentences in the community and provided to offenders once they return to the community after serving a sentence of incarceration. We also feel that, where possible, local communities should be closely involved in the delivery of these rehabilitation programs. Indeed, one-stop community centres or hubs, discussed above, may be good settings for coordinating the effective delivery of high-quality treatment programs for offenders returning to specific neighbourhoods.

Community Reintegration

The final stage of a comprehensive community strategy is the reintegration of known offenders. Reintegration usually targets serious offenders who are returning to the community after a period of incarceration. The major objectives of most reintegration efforts are to provide serious offenders with appropriate services and to monitor their behaviour and progress. Monitoring should involve community members (outreach workers, parents, teachers, employers, etc.), as well as law enforcement officials. The types of services that should be provided to these offenders are similar to those discussed above regarding both prevention and intervention. They might include specific gang exiting strategies, as well as employment, career training, education enhancement initiatives, sports and recreation programs, psychological counselling, specific rehabilitation programs and mentoring. Services must be designed to meet the needs of the individual offender.

The major goal of reintegration is to reconnect the offender to the community and provide her or him with a fresh start. According to the principles of restorative justice, before an offender can successfully re-enter society as a law-abiding citizen, they must feel (1) that they have paid their dues for the crimes that they have committed, and (2) that the community has forgiven them for their conduct and is willing to treat them as an ordinary citizen. Thus, in order to reduce the potential for further offending, communities must be organized to identify offenders returning to the community and help them in their transition back to "normal" life. Unfortunately, while a great deal of taxpayers' money is spent on the incarceration of convicted offenders, little money is spent on helping communities reintegrate ex-convicts once they return to society.

Developing a Community-Based Action Plan

We believe that this community-based approach will work best if it is developed within the communities themselves. The Neighbourhood Strategic Partnerships we propose in Pillar 4 would appear to be the ideal places in which to engage in this planning. And the community hubs we propose would, as noted earlier, also provide a good place to anchor programs and services, subject to making alternative arrangements for certain offenders until their rehabilitation is clearly taking hold.

In general, these community strategies to prevent violence will need to draw on different types of expertise from mental health professionals, academics and other crime prevention experts, law enforcement agencies and the local community residents who know the details of their neighbourhood and the people who live there.

As the program is developed, key stakeholders must be identified and recruited to help establish definitions of local gang and youth violence and conduct a comprehensive assessment or environmental scan of local strengths and issues. The assessment should document the true extent and nature of local youth violence and gang issues. Individual, family and peer factors that are associated with local violence problems should also be highlighted. A comprehensive inventory of existing community programs and resources should be prepared to better identify community needs and assist planning. Once gaps have been identified, programs that can fill these gaps must be formulated.

Wherever possible, staff for this initiative should be recruited from the local community. The use of youth outreach workers, discussed above, can also be vital to ensure good contacts with youth in the community and to help project workers better understand community dynamics. As the program evolves, feedback from clients and community members should be collected and analyzed to help refine the programs being offered.

These programs should be fully evaluated after about 24 months of operation, with evaluation outcome measures fully developed before the program begins (pre-test or baseline measures) and continuously collected throughout the implementation stage. Evaluation results could then be used to redevelop the program, eliminate shortcomings and improve overall community safety. The program could then continue with the prospect of even more positive results. There is a consensus in the academic community that an ongoing cycle of program development, evaluation, assessment and redevelopment ultimately yields the most favorable outcomes.

The Need for Action on Handguns

We discussed in chapters 3 and 5 the risk to individuals, communities and the social fabric of this province that results when alienated and disaffected youth walk our streets and enter our schools carrying loaded handguns. We noted there the impulsiveness of youth and how it often takes very little to trigger their anger, alienation and frustration. To us, it is beyond dispute that adding a handgun to that equation immeasurably increases the risk of serious violence.

As a result, while guns are not a root of violence involving youth, we consider it necessary to add our voices to those calling for a handgun ban. The Province is squarely on the record in calling for a ban, as are chiefs of police and a number of mayors. Indeed, Toronto's Mayor David Miller has been at the forefront of a strong campaign to get the federal government to recognize the risks that its refusal to ban handguns are creating.

The statistics are clear that a significant number of the guns being used to commit murders on our streets were legally owned — permitted to be among us because the federal government will not ban them. A ban will not eliminate handguns, but it will put nearly 200,000 legally owned Ontario handguns beyond the reach of youth who are prone to violence.

It is, of course, not tenable to assert that we can identify in advance all of the youth who have the immediate risk factors for violence — alienation, low self-esteem, no sense of belonging or hope, among others — and somehow incapacitate them before something triggers their inner rage or desperation. Given that, we need to do everything possible to try to ensure that they do not have a loaded gun in their pocket or backpack when a triggering event coincides with that state of mind.

And it is not only that guns make worse these impulsive acts of violence. The possession of a gun can also promote serious violence. Guns promote bravado and make it easier for those inclined to violence to act in lethal ways. Access to a gun may tip the scale between someone who is prone to violence and someone who acts violently. It is simply much easier to shoot someone from a distance than it is to confront them face-to-face with fists or a knife.

And, of course, when guns are used, the number of bystanders at risk is exponentially greater than if recourse were had to knives or fists.

Additionally, the presence of guns creates fear in the community, which can lead to people staying home or keeping their kids home and away from activities. When they do so, understandable as that is, they create the empty streets and other conditions that facilitate violence and also feed some of the alienation and lack of opportunity that lead to it.

We believe that the Province has put forward a strong position on handgun bans and has made clear the risks we all face because of laws that permit handguns to be stored in apartments and houses across the province. The Province has rightly emphasized that the problem is not just illegal guns, but the theft and misuse of legal ones as well.

We are not in a position to comment on whether there is room for the Province to act on this issue, given that Canada's constitutional law reserves much of this jurisdiction to the federal government. We think, however, that the Province should look hard to see whether there is any room at all for action beyond calling for a response from a federal government that has been very clear that it will not provide one.

The City of Toronto, which shared some legal advice with us, has noted that Ontario has enacted legislation that supplements the firearms restrictions in the *Criminal Code* and the *Firearms Act* by regulating or prohibiting the sale of ammunition, deactivated firearms and imitation firearms to individuals under 18 years of age. The issue that intrigues us is whether there is scope to go any further, at least in relation to urban areas with recent records of gun violence.

The city also advised us of Quebec legislation, which as we wrote this was expected to come into force on or before September 1, 2008, prohibiting the possession of firearms in certain places (child care facilities, educational institutions and conveyances used for public transportation). This legislation includes special search-and-seizure powers. It also requires shooting clubs and ranges to have a provincial licence and imposes requirements respecting compliance with safety regulations and a register of users' and members' facilities usage. Anyone wishing to target shoot must be a member of a shooting club, meet the conditions for continued membership and obtain an attestation of competency in the safe use of firearms. Certain persons, including education institutions' and shooting club staff, must report to the police any behaviour indicating that an individual may endanger the safety of the individual or another person by the use of a firearm.

We think the Province of Ontario should consider whether there is room to follow Quebec's lead and perhaps go further in designated urban areas. This might involve exploring whether it is possible to require that handguns be stored at secure gun clubs or in public armories in those areas, or to permit the periodic inspection of private premises in which they are stored. Alternatively, the Province should consider whether the federal government can be asked to amend the federal legislation to allow the Province to impose these kinds of standards on the storage of firearms in specific geographic areas, such as large cities with records of gun violence.

In light of the seriousness of this situation, we urge the federal government to reconsider its position on refusing to ban handguns and, pending any change in the federal position, also urge the Province to explore every possible action it could take to exercise jurisdiction, or to seek jurisdiction to act, on this very serious issue.

Chapter 10:

Accountability, Planning, Advice and Recommendations

Introduction

In Chapter 9, we put forward a comprehensive, structural approach to the roots of violence involving youth based on four foundational pillars buttressed, as necessary, by a community strategy for individual interventions. That approach represents a significant challenge, reflecting the spread and depth of the roots we identified. It calls for a comprehensive and aligned set of initiatives, but recognizes that some will take time to implement. We are confident that all of the roots we have identified need to be addressed, but we certainly are not saying that they all can be addressed right away.

We commend the Premier for giving us a mandate to undertake a wide-ranging exploration of these roots. In calling for a "roots analysis" of the violence hitting the front pages, he avoided the kind of short-term, simplistic "just get tough and it will go away" response that others have used to avoid the fundamental issues at stake. He has opened a door that others have not, and has invited a frank and independent assessment of what needs to be done to address the underlying issues.

Having opened that door, the Premier may be receiving in our report some advice that may go further and deeper than originally contemplated. We are nonetheless confident that the same foresight and resolve that led him to request this work will lead him to take on the political and other challenges that lie ahead in implementing what we propose. This will put Ontario on the path to safety and opportunity from the crossroads we identified in Chapter 5 and avoid the long-term and potentially very serious consequences of failing to do so, which we also identified in that chapter.

In moving forward on our proposals, the Premier will be able to build on the enormous energy and goodwill of those who have been working on these issues for many years, and those who are ready and eager to do more if the opportunity is made available. Our work, although focusing on a more fundamental analysis than has often been done, did not begin in a vacuum. At the provincial and other levels of government, and in communities across this province, work has been underway on various aspects of this issue for a very long time, and many individuals have combined compassion with passion to produce significant benefits for their fellow citizens.

Our analysis nonetheless took us to a level beyond individual efforts and programs, and surfaced a number of serious underlying issues that call for attention in a structured and sustained way. While this "roots" analysis has by definition caused us to focus on often very deep and sometimes divisive problems, and perhaps in some areas given our report a negative tone, we believe that our plan for the future is positive. With good communications and sustained and visible commitment, we are confident that it will earn and receive significant public support.

Fundamentally, we believe that the public in Ontario does and will support an approach based on the efficiencies of aligning governments and communities to get at entrenched social problems in a collaborative way, an approach that features working in neighbourhood partnerships to build strong communities and to nurture healthy, educated and engaged youth. And that is what we call for, along with a governance structure to ensure that change happens in a coordinated and sustained way.

In this chapter, we start by outlining the fundamental need for measurement, accountability and planning to support our proposed approach, then go on to provide our advice and recommendations. We conclude the chapter with some comments indicating how our advice and recommendations can be put into effect.

The Need for Outcome Measurements

Underpinning all that we propose are four key needs: information, measurement, targets and reporting. Ontario is well past the point where "go forth and do good" is an acceptable approach to public or social policy of this magnitude. We must first know where we are going, how we will get there, how we will know whether we are making progress and how we will know when we have arrived.

For these reasons, our proposed youth policy framework (Pillar 2) calls not only for a shared vision and agreed-upon principles, but also for specific outcome goals in a number of areas ranging from poverty and racism to education, mental health and interactions with the justice system. The value of outcome goals is that they measure results achieved, rather than work done. This means, for example, that rather than measuring how many youth a program has served, we measure what difference the service made in their lives. Instead of measuring the number of health or education programs or the spending on them, we measure specific indicators of whether people are healthier or getting a better education.

Ontario has moved towards some use of outcome targets in recent years, and so the shift we propose is one of degree. But it is a significant degree: to define the Province's overall approach to youth using the outcome goals we discussed in Pillar 2, supplemented, or perhaps in some instances supplanted, by others that may be identified in consultation with those working with youth. Other jurisdictions have outcome measures in these kinds of areas. We are confident that a collaborative effort with community agencies and some other governments could produce a good initial set of measures within a year.

These measures do not have to be complete or perfect in the first round. Indeed, we have been told that, in other jurisdictions, valuable progress was made even when the first set of outcome measures had to be selected by what data were available, rather than by what an ideal set of outcome indicators would be. In Ontario, some measures are available now, and it should be possible to develop other ones as the ministry planning exercise we discuss below proceeds.

The important thing is to shift the culture towards measuring outcomes. That culture shift, and the energy and synergies it will produce, will drive improvements in the nature and quality of the information available in many domains, allowing the indicators to be increased and made more sophisticated over time. This is an area where the pursuit of perfection should not stand in the way of effective and needed action.

Three Principles for the Use of Outcome Measures

While the outcome goals and the data available to measure them will be refined and improved over time, three core principles, which we touched on in Pillar 2, can be stated now with considerable confidence.

First, it is of critical importance in our context that, to the greatest extent possible, the outcome goals include floor targets and not just use averages. We heard a great deal about floor targets in England, where they have become a core part of governance. Essentially, a floor target sets a minimum acceptable level of attainment. It is how we as a society express our fundamental bottom lines.

An example of a floor target would be that no neighbourhood should have an obesity or diabetes rate more than a defined per cent above the provincial average, or that no school should have a graduation or literacy rate below a certain figure. Using floor targets avoids the reality that if an average is used, the target can be met by having the best-off improve their performance even if the worst-off make no progress at all or even fall further behind. Averages hide a myriad of policy and program sins, and they fundamentally fail to identify the neighbourhoods or institutions needing the most help. More significantly, when addressing the risks for violence, it is those who are doing the least well and losing hope as a result whom we must identify and on whom we must concentrate. We cannot do this if we are distracted by averages.

We note in this regard that floor targets can be set by neighbourhood or by institution, or both. Often, both may be needed. For example, looking at graduation rates by school tells you where to look to see if there are issues with how youth are being taught or treated when they get to school; but looking at those rates by neighbourhood tells you where there are issues in the home or community environments of those youth — in what they are bringing with them to school. This is particularly significant at the high school level, where youth from one neighbourhood often go to a number of different schools. Floor targets are therefore particularly useful in taking policy-makers to the place where the problems are being created, and not just where they surface. When we measure against this kind of standard, we immediately see where extra help must go.

Measuring by neighbourhood can also support the kind of resident engagement we have called for. For example, England now has a website known as "floor targets interactive" (http://www.fti.communities.gov.uk/fti/) where all residents can see where their community stands in relation to many of the national targets. Just by entering in their postal code they can select from a large number of domains or indicators, and with a click of their mouse bring up a chart showing how their area compares to the national targets. As importantly, they can see whether progress is being made from quarter to quarter and year to year, and can become involved in efforts to press for more action where such appears to be needed most. Putting this kind of information in the hands of residents is a key way to support their informed participation in governance.

This brings us to the second important principle in this area: the need to track racial and other relevant differences in the achievement of outcome goals so that we can identify and address systemic barriers and thereby ensure that all members of our society have a fair opportunity to fulfil their potential. For example, depending on the makeup of its student population, a school might meet its outcome target of, say, a 90-per-cent graduation rate even though only 70 per cent of its Aboriginal or Black students were graduating. Floor targets that measure attainment by relevant groups allow this kind of issue to be identified. This permits remedial measures to be targeted where they are most needed and allows the response to focus on the circumstances of those who need the most help, or particular kinds of help.

We called for the collection of race-based statistics in Pillar 1, and will not repeat that analysis. We do, however, want to stress how integral such information is to addressing key sources of low self-esteem and alienation.

The third principle for the use of outcome measures is that, whether measured by groups, institutions or neighbourhoods, the outcome goals should, wherever possible, be supplemented by a further commitment to reduce the gap between the most successful and the least. This gap-reduction approach is an integral part of Britain's strategy for its disadvantaged neighbourhoods. In our context, which focuses on conditions that produce alienation, a lack of hope or opportunity or sense of belonging to society, our efforts to address these conditions will be challenged if we fail to reduce these gaps. We will not nurture a sense of optimism, hope and belonging by raising outcomes for youth who see themselves still falling behind the rest of society.

The Need for Indicators to Track Outcome Goals

Once outcome goals and gap-reduction targets are set, the remaining issue is to set annual or sometimes two- to three-year targets for progress towards the goals and targets. This is a political exercise, involving as it does a series of financial commitments, which are more time-specific and for longer terms than governments usually make. Indicators are, however, essential to fine-tuning the strategy and to accountability and maintaining public support.

In an area where some goals may take a decade or more of sustained commitment to achieve, public support cannot be maintained if there are no regular benchmarks of progress: the public is not likely to be motivated by a long march to a distant goal. A series of interim targets, by contrast, provides an opportunity to work towards commitments that can be seen and felt in the short run, and thus helps motivate service providers and the public alike.

We note in this connection that the public's approach to these kinds of benchmarks is often quite sophisticated. For example, even though Britain fell short of its first poverty reduction target, many observers gave the government high marks for having come close and for renewing its commitment to the next target, even as economic times became more challenging.

Within government, it is crucial to track progress against periodic indicators to determine whether matters are on track or need mid-course adjustments in policies or resourcing. In this connection, we were told in Britain that the challenges of meeting a public interim target on poverty reduction led to modifications of its poverty reduction strategy at a point where they could make an important difference to the second interim target. In that instance, the focus of the neighbourhoods strategy was shifted to more heavily emphasize employment. Had there been no interim targets, it is quite possible that valuable time would have been lost before the need for this kind of adjustment was identified.

As a result, published interim indicators seem to us to be crucial both to maintaining public confidence and to efficiently managing the initiatives in question.

Reporting and Accountability

It is vital that the outcome goals and interim indicators be public and well-communicated. But members of the public cannot be expected to be able to assess progress towards those goals without access to contextual and analytical information on the progress being made and any barriers being encountered.

For that reason, we proposed in Pillar 4 that the Cabinet Committee on Social Inclusion and Anti-Racism be mandated to prepare for publication regular progress reports on the outcome goals and indicators. These reports should be reviewed in advance with the Premier's Advisory Council, also proposed in that pillar, to help ensure that they are meaningful for members of the public who will use them.

Reliance on Ministry Planning

As we noted in Chapter 1, the period from when our work got underway in late August 2007 to when we began to submit our report for translation and publishing in early July 2008 was only a little over 10 months. We set out in Chapter 2 how many people we saw and the amount and nature of the work we were able to accomplish. The balance of our report shows the range and the complexity of the issues with which we had to grapple to address our terms of reference.

We believe that the success of the strategy we propose will be best assured if it falls to the involved Ontario ministries to build specific and coordinated action plans based on the advice we were able to provide in the time available to us. We are comfortable in proceeding this way because, right from the start, we received very positive support from a significant number of deputy ministers. We at no time sensed a resistance to our broad directions nor to the kinds of specifics we were able to share as our work progressed.

We are confident that, given the leadership and alignment mechanisms set out in Pillar 4, Ontario's ministries have the staff, the required background, the expertise — and the commitment — to turn our proposed directions and our advice into detailed plans, and to develop and achieve the kinds of outcome goals and indicators we have just outlined. We stress, however, that strong leadership and coordination by the secretariat proposed in Pillar 4 are essential. This is not a process that can succeed by having ministries work within their silos to interpret our advice and develop their own separate plans. The solutions must be as interconnected as the roots they seek to address.

We believe that, in this process, the secretariat and the ministries should work with other orders of government to the greatest extent possible. We nonetheless repeat our view that, important as that collaboration can be, efforts to obtain it should not delay provincial action when, as we have seen, action is badly needed. There is a clear need to favour productive action over protracted negotiations.

Ontario's ministries should also bring key community agencies and funders to the table to ensure they have the best possible on-the-ground appreciation of the status quo and how to respond to it. In many areas, there are also individuals with great expertise on particular topics who should be brought in to help the ministry policy and operations teams prepare their plans. The issues are sufficie[illegible] complex and the needs so great that traditional silo-based approaches to planning s[illegible] not be maintained.

Given that support and its own considerable expertise, we believe the government could approve and publish coordinated ministry plans by next summer. This timing permits at least the initial outcome indicators to be taken into account in this process. It also allows time for ministries to join up through public service agreements, as discussed in Pillar 4, to ensure the required collaboration. And it means that we would not go into another summer without a comprehensive plan in place to address the roots of violence involving youth.

Recommendations for the Premier

Introduction

As will be clear from the preceding chapters, our core conclusions are that:

- The roots of violence involving youth are widespread, interconnected and deep.
- These roots have placed Ontario at a crossroads from which matters could get much worse if action to address them is not taken.
- Only an aligned and sustained commitment, led by the provincial government, will effectively address the roots we have identified.

The structures required to act on those conclusions can be defined with considerable confidence, having regard to experience elsewhere, our research and our consultations. We accordingly make specific recommendations at the structural level. At the level of individual programs or initiatives we generally offer advice rather than providing detailed recommendations. We take this approach because of the clear need for coordinated planning and close work with communities, agencies and other governments to determine the specifics of what needs to be done in each community across this highly diverse province to address the very serious issues we have surfaced.

Fundamentally, we strongly believe that, starting this fall, the Province must put at the heart of its overall agenda a sustained, aligned and structural response to the roots of violence involving youth, based on the four pillars we have proposed, and complemented by an effective community-based intervention strategy for youth who are already involved in, or perhaps on the verge of, serious violence. In summary, the four pillars are:

A repaired social context to make Ontario's social context work for all Ontarians by addressing the roots of violence involving youth, including poverty, racism, poor housing, youth mental health, education, the need for supports for families and youth engagement, and issues arising in youth justice.

A youth policy framework to guide and coordinate policies and programs for youth by reference to developmental stages and outcome goals.

A neighbourhood capacity and empowerment focus to strengthen communities through initiatives such as schools as hubs, supporting resident engagement and stable funding for agencies that serve disadvantaged communities.

Integrated governance to drive and coordinate work across the Ontario government and to work effectively with the other orders of government and with the strengthened communities.

To build and maintain support for the needed action, we are also convinced that the Ontario government must implement an effective communications strategy to bring the main findings of our report to the attention of the public. It should focus on the serious risks of failing to act now to address the circumstances that are producing alienation, a lack of hope and belonging and the other conditions we have identified as being the immediate risk factors for serious, explosive and unpredictable violence involving youth.

Structural Recommendations

1. The Ontario government must immediately put in place a governance structure that can align and sustain over the long haul the work required from a dozen or more ministries, and at the same time can also support effective collaborative work with other orders of government and with communities.

2. The governance structure should be headed by a Cabinet Committee on Social Inclusion and Anti-Racism, or a central body with equivalent authority, with a clear mandate to develop a corporate agenda, approve coordinated work plans for ministries, monitor progress and report regularly to the public against published indicators of progress.

3. The committee should be supported by a dedicated secretariat within Cabinet Office to provide policy advice and oversee, on the committee's behalf, the work by ministries to produce and implement coordinated plans to effectively address the roots we have identified. The secretariat should also have a research capacity to identify emerging needs and responsibility for monitoring the effectiveness of the structural initiatives established to advance this agenda.

4. The Cabinet committee should meet periodically with a small number of external associate members, who would bring relevant experience and expertise to its deliberations, and should be supported by a Premier's Advisory Council on Social Inclusion and Anti-Racism to ensure that a variety of perspectives, including those of youth, informs the work of the committee on an ongoing basis.

5. Internal alignment mechanisms should be put in place to ensure sustained and coordinated progress at the provincial level, including performance agreements

for senior officials, impact analyses, public reporting, public sector agreements among ministries and a number of cross-ministry units.

6. The Province should create a comprehensive youth policy framework for Ontario to provide overall direction for the myriad of programs affecting youth. The framework should be developed in consultation with communities, youth and service providers and should include a vision, a set of principles and a series of specific outcome indicators to align programs to meet common goals and to measure whether progress is being made over time.

7. The Province should adopt the place-based approach we have outlined, in which a pivotal although not exclusive focus is placed on addressing the roots of violence involving youth by working within and with the neighbourhoods where those roots are concentrated and where they are producing a downward cycle of disadvantage and violence.

8. To identify the neighbourhoods for the place-based approach, the Province should employ the Index of Relative Disadvantage we have proposed to determine on a provincewide basis the areas where disadvantage is most concentrated. Once the index results are available, the Province, through a lead ministry for community building, should immediately open discussions with the affected municipalities to identify local factors, such as the availability of services, for inclusion in the determination of the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods and to define the boundaries of such neighbourhoods.

9. Within the identified disadvantaged neighbourhoods, the Province should support and ensure the funding of the following structural initiatives:

   - Community hubs to provide space for community activities, including for meetings, recreation and the arts, and service providers. Wherever possible, these hubs should be based in or near schools.

   - Full access to schools for community activities and services, by having a body with facilities management and program experience lease the premises in school off-hours and engage with the community to identify priorities for the use of the space.

   - A Neighbourhood Strategic Partnership (NSP) to bring together the Province, other governments, community residents and service providers. The NSP would provide a forum for collaboration to develop and help implement a local plan to address the roots of violence as they manifest themselves in each disadvantaged community.

- An arm's-length funding board to support local initiatives to bring residents together to form networks of mutual assistance and community involvement, to plan the use of the hub and to participate in governance initiatives through the NSP, and also at least one youth-led organization to engage and serve youth based on local needs and priorities.
- A local coordinating body to help improve access to the services offered in the neighbourhood and to move towards better coordination amongst them.

10. With particular reference to the disadvantaged neighbourhoods, the Province should engage with community-serving agencies to develop a mechanism to provide streamlined and stable funding, and continuity of service, for agencies meeting key community needs.

11. The Province should, by the summer of 2009, prepare and publish an integrated plan setting out how ministries, and combinations of them, will work at the provincial and at the local levels to address the roots we have identified.

12. The Province should commit to measuring and publishing progress towards defined outcome goals as a central part of its approach to the roots agenda. To the greatest extent possible, the outcome goals should include minimum standards of achievement, a level below which no institution or community should fall (known elsewhere as "floor targets"). Progress towards those targets should be tracked by racial and other relevant differences.

Advice on Specific Initiatives to Address the Roots

Our report also offers extensive advice on how to respond to each of the roots we have identified. We primarily frame this as advice rather than as detailed recommendations because we believe that the most effective actions arising from our findings will be those taken with a full understanding of the capacities of Ontario's ministries and their potential to work outside their silos, of the issues they are already pursuing, of the realities on the ground across the province, of the competing priorities, and also with the kind of engagement of other governments, experts and communities that was outside our mandate and time frame.

In our view, only an integrated and collaborative approach to the roots will succeed. That is why we propose a body at the centre of government with the mandate and resources to consider our advice, situate it within the context of the balance of the government's agenda, determine priorities, make linkages among ministries and with other governments and manage a process of both building and being responsive to communities across the province. Only this kind of body and approach will be able to produce a coherent, long-range plan for the province capable of effectively responding to the intertwined and entrenched nature of the many roots we identified. This need not be a lengthy exercise: given a major focus by the ministries and with the leadership structure we propose, we believe that the planning exercise can be completed and the coordinated plans made public by the summer of 2009.

For ease of reference, we list below the major areas where we call for action and set out brief examples of the advice we have provided in our report, along with a reference to where our full advice can be found. Although these issues are presented individually, for ease of reference, actions to address them must be fully integrated if they are to be effective. To give but one example: providing a youth with even the best mentor will accomplish little if that youth goes home every day to a dysfunctional family and to cramped, substandard and depressing living conditions, attends a school that discourages their achievement, has an unaddressed mental health condition or lives in a neighbourhood where there is nothing to do but hang around aimlessly or get involved in anti-social activities.

13. **The Province must address the level of poverty in Ontario, its concentrations and the many invidious circumstances that accompany it.** In addition to reducing the level of poverty, this should include promoting economic integration by ensuring that there is affordable, good-quality housing in many different neighbourhoods and by substantially improving and diversifying the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods so that people do not leave as soon as their economic circumstances permit. Among other initiatives we outline, it should also include ensuring that high-quality services, recreational and arts facilities, parks and schools are available to those who are the most disadvantaged, and that neighbourhoods are safe. Overall, where people live should not itself produce the immediate risk factors for their being involved in violence. (pages 229–238)

14. **The Province must articulate more effectively its commitment to anti-racism and should address this urgent issue as a major priority in its response to our report.** As a key anchor for other initiatives, we suggest that the Province should require all ministries and public sector agencies to develop and publish a specific anti-racism plan with measurable objectives and timelines. (pages 238–245)

15. **The Province must take steps to bring youth mental health out of the shadows.** The Province should enhance prevention through programs that promote health, engagement and activity for youth. It should also provide locally available mental health services that afford early identification and treatment for children and youth in the context of their families and schools, that are culturally appropriate and that are integrated with the community hubs we propose. (pages 246–247)

16. **The Province must remove the barriers and disincentives to education that exist for many children and youth.** We suggest a number of ways in which this can be done, including by ensuring that teachers and administrators better reflect the neighbourhoods they serve, developing and providing a curriculum that is racially and culturally inclusive, addressing the continuing concerns about the safe schools provisions, better connecting schools to families and communities and providing ongoing educational and mentoring supports and incentives to encourage students to remain in school, engage in learning and seek further education, especially in priority neighbourhoods. (pages 248–251)

17. **The Province must implement local, integrated, culturally specific services for families of all forms.** Our advice is that supports to families should begin with prenatal care and should include creative outreach to early-years programs and the new all-day learning initiative for four- and five-year-olds. Services for children and their families should be fully integrated, and particular attention should be given to youth who do not have, or do not live with, families. After-school programs should be available from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. to promote good nutrition and positive activity, and to help keep youth off the streets in what many consider to be prime time for crime. Among other initiatives, the Province should also implement programs to familiarize families, including new settlers, with and connect them to community structures and supports. (pages 251–256)

18. **The Province must increase the supply of decent, affordable housing units, diversify their locations and improve standards within both public and private accommodation.** This should be accompanied by measures to improve transportation services for disadvantaged areas and ensure that the physical environment does not promote crime, but instead provides safe and welcoming places for gathering and play. Community markets and other ways of fostering cohesion should also be facilitated, and stores and businesses should be brought back to neighbourhoods that lack them. (pages 256–257)

19. **The Province must recognize the value of sports and arts in supporting learning, development and creativity of youth.** The Province should work with municipalities, school boards and community agencies to remove barriers that include income level, transportation and a lack of usable space. The Province should move to immediately embed accessible sports and arts programs in the priority neighbourhoods. (pages 257–260)

20. **The Province must work actively with communities and agencies to assist every child and youth to have access to at least one adult who provides nurturing and support, and towards providing youth with a voice in matters that affect them.** Among other initiatives to support youth engagement, the Province should put in place training, standards and supports for mentors across the province, and all sectors working with youth should adopt meaningful and sustained measures to include the youth voice in their governance structures. (pages 260–262)

21. **The Province must support the contribution of youth workers to initiatives that address the roots of violence involving youth.** The Province should recognize that youth workers bridge the divide between youth and their communities and schools, provide counselling and connectivity to the most disadvantaged youth and serve as role models, especially when they are from the same neighbourhoods or share similar circumstances. (pages 262–263)

22. **The Province must work with and encourage the private sector to create meaningful, long-term employment opportunities for youth.** The Province should adopt a broad strategy to prepare youth for work and to help marginalized youth obtain and maintain it. The private sector should examine barriers to opportunity and employment of youth and work with the Province to shape holistic programs that provide learning opportunities leading to meaningful sustained employment and leadership development opportunities for youth. (pages 263–267)

23. **The Province must bring coordination to the three ministries that operate parts of the youth justice system, ensure an overall policy focus and support a more balanced approach to resourcing by establishing a Youth Justice Advisory Board.** The Province should also take steps to reduce the over-criminalization of Ontario youth compared with those in other large jurisdictions, and to reduce the ways in which the powers of the justice system can be misused to produce alienation, a lack of hope or opportunity and other immediate risk factors for violence. Overall, all parts of the justice system need to adopt a more strategic approach to youth. (pages 267–289)

Related Advice

24. To complement the roots strategy we have put forward, the Province should adopt a community-focused strategy to enhance its capacity to successfully intervene with, treat and reintegrate those youth who have committed acts of violence or have a propensity to do so. This strategy should, to the greatest possible extent, rely on initiatives that have been proven to work in similar contexts.

25. To reduce the risk of serious violence where those interventions have not been made or have not succeeded, the Province should continue to press the federal government to implement a handgun ban in Ontario, and should also explore every feasible initiative it might take itself to minimize the risks while the federal government continues to permit these guns in Ontario apartments and homes.

26. Having regard to the practical and jurisdictional reasons why our review did not seek to study violence within First Nations in Ontario, the Province should meet with First Nations leaders to consider the potential applicability of our advice to those communities and to consider whether a specific additional review concerning them is warranted.

27. Pending those discussions, the Province should act immediately to ensure that programs and safeguards are in place for children from First Nations communities who must move away from home to attend high school and to ensure that services are available to families who relocate to be with their children.

Perspectives on Implementation

As discussed earlier in our report, we believe that a comprehensive and coordinated plan is essential to make progress on the roots, considering their number, complexity and interconnections.

In that respect, we have provided a broad and multi-faceted framework to address the roots of violence involving youth. We appreciate, however, that our report is being submitted at a point in time when the Province faces economic challenges, when it must deal with multiple priorities, and when its flexibility to immediately implement a bold reform agenda will face limits. We similarly understand that the government, working with its partners, will be best placed to determine the optimal timing and sequencing for the recommendations that we have put forward.

While we are mindful of these constraints, we also believe that the government must respond proactively to implement the advice that we have provided. In general terms, it is our view that the Province can make substantial progress towards preparing its integrated plan by next summer. Within this context, and based on our discussions with stakeholders, we offer the following views on how some of our key recommendations could be advanced.

Recommendations for Priority Implementation

We believe that there are three key areas where progress can and should be made independently of the government's overall planning process, in addition to the early action that we hope will follow release of the report of the Cabinet Committee on Poverty Reduction later this year. We accordingly make three further recommendations to the Premier for urgent action in the following areas:

28. **Children's Mental Health**: This issue affects many aspects of the roots: the stability of families and the ability of parents to work and parent, how youth develop with their peers, how they do in school, how they interact with the justice system and their life chances overall. We believe that one or more associations with expertise in youth mental health should be retained immediately to prepare a plan for universal, community-based access to mental health services for children and youth for the earliest possible implementation. They should also prepare plans for all interim investments that are feasible within the limits of the available professional expertise in Ontario. In a province with a health budget of $40 billion and a youth incarceration budget of $163 million, we believe that the $200-million estimate of the cost of providing universal youth mental health services is manageable within this government's mandate.

29. **Anti-Racism**: It is tragic — not ironic — that 30 years ago this November, Walter Pitman entitled his report on police minority relations: *Now Is Not Too Late*. Since that time, 30 separate groups of five- or six-year-old children have started Grade 1 and many have gone through their school years without seeing sustained progress on these issues. For many of them, now *is* too late — their lives marred, their futures circumscribed and their faith in this society quite justifiably shaken. And many of them are the parents of children in the system now, with little reason and sometimes no ability to instil hope in those children.

To lay the foundation for the extensive action required to address this growing problem, the Province should proceed immediately to develop the methodology for the collection of race-based data in all key domains. As well, to ensure that action is underway before the summer of 2009 to address the pressing issues that arise in police-minority relations in a number of neighbourhoods, we believe the provincial funds that we propose for youth-police liaison committees and for front-line officer training programs should be put in place as quickly as possible.

Additionally, the Province should take immediate steps to put in place measures that will ensure that teachers and school administrators better reflect the neighbourhoods they serve.

30. **Steps Towards Community Hubs**: There is an overwhelming consensus in favour of building community hubs and, accordingly, no reason to delay action on that front. In neighbourhoods where it is clear that the Index of Relative Disadvantage will demonstrate a high level of disadvantage, or where similar methodologies have already done so, the Province should promptly initiate discussions with the municipal governments, to begin to plan for a hub if none exists and in particular to determine the availability of recreational and arts facilities. Where the latter facilities are lacking, the Province should work actively with the Ontario Realty Corporation and the municipality to lease alternative space for youth and youth services until a hub is developed. Another winter and spring should not go by in the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods with there being no safe place for youth to gather and play.

Short-term Building Blocks

In addition to the three areas that we have just canvassed, we believe that the government's implementation priorities in the short term must focus on putting a number of key building blocks into place, upon which the success of our advice will ultimately depend. The actions in question are set out below:

- Establish a Cabinet Committee on Social Inclusion and Anti-Racism, or equivalent, and the Premier's Advisory Council. Designate the lead ministry for community building and appoint the head of the Social Inclusion and Anti-Racism Secretariat.

- Staff up the Secretariat to commence work on the coordination of the government's action plan and on the youth policy framework and retain research services to develop outcome targets.

- Hold focused discussions on the Index of Relative Disadvantage with a view to finalizing it in time for an initial data run in early 2009. This will identify areas for conversations with municipalities to select and define the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods for the priority actions we outline.

- Retain a body or bodies with relevant expertise to prepare a plan for universal access to mental health services for children, along with plans for more immediate services investments, particularly to ensure that those in custody or care needing such services get them as soon as possible.

- Initiate work, in consultation with the Ontario Human Rights Commission, to develop a provincewide methodology for the collection and use of race-based statistics.

In the case of the first two items, the Province must move quickly to put in place the necessary governance structures. In the case of the other recommendations, and subject to discussions with municipal governments and community groups, we believe that substantial progress could be achieved within six months.

Short to Medium-term Initiatives

We believe the Province must also work to make steady progress on the following components of our strategy and appreciate that several will require more in depth consultations among ministries and with municipal governments, agencies and community groups.

- Oversee continuing efforts of ministries to develop action plans having regard to directions set by the Cabinet committee and the advice in this report and establish working groups with key communities, agencies and experts to advance this work.

- Establish the fund for youth-police community liaison committees and for the initial short-term anti-racism training programs.

- Ensure that priority planning for a representative teaching force in disadvantaged neighbourhoods is underway.

- Develop the youth policy framework, with as many outcome goals as possible in the time available.

- Launch an assessment of recreational, cultural and other hub needs with municipalities in areas identified as likely to be determined as areas of high disadvantage when the Index of Relative Disadvantage is run.

- In identified disadvantaged areas that lack space for youth to gather, play or create, seek out leasing opportunities, including with the Ontario Realty Corporation, to make such space available while planning for hubs and recreation and arts centres gets underway.

- Establish the funding board for youth-led and resident-engagement organizations with the objective of having some of these in place in the summer of 2009.

- Begin discussions with the community agency sector on ways to streamline and stabilize their funding, involving municipal governments and other funders as appropriate.

Towards Full Implementation

We believe that, assuming good progress is made on the building blocks and other initiatives, other key components of our strategy, listed below, would then fall into place. While the availability of resources and the need to consult with partners will dictate the pace and timing of implementation, we believe that some work can occur to advance these objectives within the first year.

- Appoint the Youth Justice Advisory Board.

- Start the negotiation process to have facilities managers operate schools as hubs in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, as they are identified.

- Identify a university or college home for the institute for excellence through program assessment.

- Finalize ministry implementation plans and public service agreements for approval.
- As disadvantaged neighbourhoods are formally identified, work with municipalities to define areas for joint effort and begin to establish Neighbourhood Strategic Partnerships, or work within existing equivalent structures.
- Provide initial grants to youth-led organizations and resident engagement organizations in the identified disadvantaged neighbourhoods.
- Complete and publish the government's action plan.

As we have noted, the roots we have identified will require sustained and aligned attention over the long haul. The government's plans will provide the details of how it proposes to approach that task. For our part, we strongly believe that whatever those plans may be, the government should continue to engage and involve the public in this endeavour through regular and highly accessible public reporting of progress based on published outcome goals and interim indicators in all key areas.

Conclusion

Although we now formally conclude our work on this report, we emphasize that our commitment to the issues it addresses did not start when the Premier asked us to undertake this review, and it will not end with the submission of this report. Whether in official capacities, if the Premier wishes, or as private citizens, we will continue to be active participants and willing partners in the work that must be done to ensure all youth in this very rich province lead safe, healthy lives in healthy families and healthy communities.

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Youth Criminal Justice Act (2002, c. 1)

An Act to Combat Poverty and Social Exclusion, R.S.Q. L-7, c. II

Appendix 1:

Terms of Reference for the Review — Review of the Roots of Youth Violence

Preamble

This review will help identify and analyze underlying factors contributing to youth violence and provide recommendations for Ontario to move forward. It will build on existing investments in Ontario's public education system, in creating opportunities for young people, in making schools and communities safer and on the important work of previous reviews and key partners like the City of Toronto and the United Way.

Terms of Reference

Examine youth violence and its underlying causes and make recommendations on how to:

- Create opportunities for youth to maximize their potential.
- Make communities and schools safer.

Mandate

- Consider existing provincial investments and programs related to child development, youth violence, youth at risk, and creating educational and employment opportunities for young people.
- Assess approaches used in other jurisdictions to evaluate potential for successful application in Ontario's context.
- Identify further opportunities for prevention and the rehabilitation of youth.
- Formulate recommendations on:
    - Immediate and longer-term actions and solutions involving all related parties, including government (provincial, federal, municipal), communities, private sector
    - Improved coordination between governments and with community agencies in planning and delivery of programs
    - Meaningfully engaging youth, communities, leaders, faith-based groups, neighbourhoods, police and social services agencies in developing common outcomes and objectives
    - Ongoing mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating effectiveness of investments, programs and services.
- Recommended approaches should be evidence-based and outcome-oriented.
- A report is due to the Premier by September 2008. The Government of Ontario will ensure secretariat support and provide adequate resources for the review.

Appendix 2:

List of Contributors

During the Review of the Roots of Youth Violence, the Co-Chairs and review staff met with an estimated 750 organization representatives and other individuals. Some made more than one presentation, participated in more than one meeting, or submitted a written brief. The following lists reflect the major components of our consultations.

Organizations That Met with the Co-Chairs, Review Staff or Both

(Delegations ranged from one to a dozen or more individuals.)

African-Canadian Christian Network
African Canadian Legal Aid Clinic
Association of Ontario Health Centres
Becoming Achievers
Big Brothers, Big Sisters
Black Action Defence League
Black Business & Professional Association
Black Daddies Club
Black Youth Helpline
Boreal Institute, University of Toronto
Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada
Broad African Resources Centre
Canadian Tamil Congress
Canadian Tamil Youth Development Centre
Centre for Addiction and Mental Health
Child Development Institute
Children's Mental Health Ontario
Coalition of African Canadian Organizations
Colleges Ontario
Consul General of Grenada and The Grenadines, Jenny Gumbs

Consul General of Jamaica, Anne Marie Bonner
Council of Agencies Serving South Asians
Crown Prosecutor, Jamaica, Pearnel Charles Jr.
DreamNow
Enable Solutions
Frontier College
Grassroots Youth Collaborative
Foster Terrace After School Program
Heritage Canada
Jamaican Canadian Association
Jane/Finch Community and Family Centre
John Howard Society
Keeping People Housed
Kinark Foundation
Laidlaw Foundation
Malvern Rouge Valley Youth Services
Minister of Labour, Jamaica, Hon. Pearnel Charles Sr.
National Crime Prevention Centre
Office of the Fairness Commissioner
Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth
Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police
Ontario Human Rights Commission
Ontario Multifaith Council
Ontario Police College
Ontario Principals' Council
Ontario Provincial Police
Ontario Public School Boards' Association
Operation Springboard
Ontario Teachers' Federation
Pathways to Education
Prime Minister, Jamaica, Hon. Bruce Golding
Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth
Remix Project
Roots of Empathy
School Community Safety Advisory Panel
Sistering
South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario
SPACE Coalition
Students Commission
Student Vote
Syl Apps Youth and Secure Treatment Centre

Toronto Catholic District School Board
Toronto Community Housing
Toronto District School Board
Toronto Police Service
Toronto Police Services Board
Toronto Supportive Boarding and Rooming House Association
Toronto Youth Cabinet
Tropicana
United Way Toronto
Violence as a Public Health Issue Network
YMCA
York Regional Police
York University
Youth Challenge Fund

Individuals who Met with the Co-Chairs, Review Staff or Both

Bromley Armstrong
Kehinde Bah
Courtney Betty
Rose Bongolan
Dr. Gina Browne
Michael Chettleburgh
Andy Copp
Dr. Wendy Craig
David Crombie
Dr. Rose Dyson
Neil Edwards
Judy Finlay
Dr. David Hulchanski
Dr. Carl James
Dr. Tamari Kitossa
Dr. Erica Lawson
Deana Malcolm
Sean Mauricette aka "Subliminal"
Paul Musembwa
Dr. Fraser Mustard
Janet Nelson
Dr. Charles Pascal

Dr. Debra Pepler
Alan Riddell
Charles Simon
Charles Spence
Jerome Sylvan
Ester Symonds
Ryan Teschner
Insp. Rick Wills
Trevor Wilson

Neighbourhood Insight Sessions

Organizers estimate that more than 400 people contributed to the Neighbourhood Insight Sessions, with an average of 20 representatives of the larger community attending each of the eight meetings with the Co-Chairs. For a list of participants, see the *Final Report, Neighbourhood Insight Sessions*, reproduced in Volume 3.

Hamilton Insight Session
Jamestown Insight Session
Jane-Finch Insight Session
Kingston-Galloway Insight Session
Kitchener-Waterloo Insight Session
L'Amoreaux Insight Session
Ottawa Insight Session
Thunder Bay Insight Session

Other Community Meetings

Meetings marked with an asterisk were held in conjunction with the Neighbourhood Insight Sessions.

Brookside Youth Facility
City of Thunder Bay *
City of Toronto
Ottawa Youth Justice Services Network*
Ottawa Civic Officials*
Peel Region Youth Violence Prevention Initiative

Rathburn Area Youth Project, Etobicoke
Thunder Bay Education Officials*
Urban Aboriginal Youth
Windsor Civic Officials
Youth Challenge Fund Marketplace

Other Consultations

The review also sponsored two forums: one in cooperation with Legal Aid Ontario to explore legal aid issues, and one in cooperation with Ryerson University to discuss ways post-secondary institutions might better engage with their surrounding communities.

Legal Aid Forum, February 6, 2008

Aboriginal Legal Services of Toronto
African Canadian Legal Clinic
Community Legal Education Ontario
Justice for Children and Youth
Legal Aid Ontario
Metro Toronto Chinese & Southeast Asian Legal Clinic

University and Colleges Collaboration Forum, March 11, 2008

Those attending this forum included presidents, vice-presidents and other senior officials from community colleges and universities; executive directors and staff of neighbourhood, social services, funding agencies and frontline programs; and senior administrators from the City of Toronto.

Access Alliance
African Canadian Heritage Association
Breaking the Cycle
Centennial College
City of Toronto Recreation

Community Social Planning Council of Toronto
Durham College
East Metro Youth Services
East Scarborough Storefront
George Brown College
Humber College Institute of Technology & Advanced Learning
Jane/Finch Community and Family Centre
Lawrence Heights Community Health Centre
Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities
Ontario Justice Education Network
Pathways to Education Canada
Rexdale Community Health Centre
Ryerson University
St. Christopher House
Seneca College
Sheridan Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning
The Learning Partnership
Toronto Community Housing
Toronto Public Health
Toronto Public Library
Tropicana Community Services
University of Toronto
U of T Scarborough
York University
YMCA of Greater Toronto

Written Submissions (Organizations and Individuals)

African Canadian Heritage Association
ArtReach Toronto
John Belfon
Lorenzo Berardinetti, MPP, Scarborough Southwest
Boys and Girls Clubs of Canada
Kalemah Campbell
Central Toronto Youth Services
Chess Institute of Canada
Rev. David Chisling
Olivia Chow, MP, Trinity-Spadina
Antoine Coote

Crime Prevention Ottawa
Hon. Roy Cullen, MP, Etobicoke North
Bill Day
Bob Delaney, MPP, Mississauga Streetsville
Rick Dykstra, MP, St. Catharines
East Metro Youth Services
Family Counselling Centre
Hon. John Godfrey, MP, Don Valley West
Gary Goodyear, MP, Cambridge
Spanna Guevara
Dr. Helena Jaczek, MPP, Oak Ridges-Markham
John Howard Society of Canada
Senator Michael Kirby
Laidlaw Foundation
Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario
Lori Lukinuk
Mattawa and Area Youth Centre
Hon. John McKay, MP, Scarborough Guildwood
Hon. Madeleine Meilleur, MPP, Ottawa-Vanier
Anne Moloney
Margaret and Lawrence Nelson
New Democratic Party of Canada, Ontario Caucus
Hon. Rob Nicholson, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada
Gary Norris
Ontario Association of Social Workers, Eastern Branch
Ontario Bar Association
Ontario Coalition for Mandatory Parenting Education
Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres
Ontario Human Rights Commission
Ontario Public Health Association
Ontario School Counsellors' Association
Parks and Recreation Ontario
Peacebuilders International (Canada)
Play Works
Region of Peel
Lou Rinaldi, MPP, Northumberland-Quinte West
St. Leonard's Community Services
Liz Sandals, MPP, Guelph
Hon. Judy Sgro, MP, York West
Catherine Soplet
Michael Thompson, Toronto City Councillor

Toronto City Summit Alliance
Urban Music Association of Canada
Women's Health in Women's Hands
YWCA Toronto

Government of Ontario

The Co-Chairs appreciate the assistance they received from Ontario government ministries at different times during the review process. The following papers were provided to the review as part of its research initiative:

Ministry of Children and Youth Services, Mentoring and Violence Prevention/Intervention: Promising Practices for Program Development with Children and Youth

Ministry of Children and Youth Services, The Roots of Violence: Evidence from the Literature with Emphasis on Child and Youth Mental Health Disorder

Ministry of Citizenship, Research Paper on Immigration Settlement Programs

Ministry of Community and Social Services, Role of Social Services in Mitigating Youth Violence

Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services, Youth Gun and Gang Violence

Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Health Promotion Strategies for Youth Engagement in the Arts, Sports, Recreation and Leadership

Ministry of Education, Roots of Youth Violence: Ministry of Education Background Paper

Ministry of Health Promotion, Addressing Youth Violence Through a Health Promotion Lens

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, The Impact of Urban Design and Infrastructure on Youth Violence

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Youth Violence, the UK's Neighbourhood Regeneration Strategy and Housing

In addition, the Co-Chairs and secretariat staff met at various times with representatives of the following ministries:

Cabinet Office
Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs
Ministry of the Attorney General
Ministry of Children and Youth Services
Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration
Ministry of Community and Social Services
Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services
Ministry of Culture
Ministry of Economic Development and Trade
Ministry of Education
Ministry of Finance
Ministry of Government and Consumer Services
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
Ministry of Health Promotion
Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal

Commissioned Research Papers

(Authors marked with an asterisk met with the Co-Chairs to discuss their work.)

Tullio Caputo*, Michel Vallée*, *A Comparative Analysis of Youth Justice Approaches*

Anthony N. Doob*, Jane B. Sprott, Cheryl Marie Webster, *Understanding Youth Crime: The Impact of Law Enforcement Approaches on the Incidence of Violent Crime Involving Youth and Matters Related to Understanding the Implications of these Findings*

Desmond Ellis*, *A Methodology to Identify Communities in Ontario Where High or Increasing Relative Disadvantage May Lead to Youth Violence*

Rinaldo Walcott*, Cecil Foster, Mark Campbell, David Sealy, *Racial Minority Perspectives on Violence*

Scot Wortley**, *Province at the Crossroads: Statistics on Youth Violence in Ontario*

*** Dr. Scot Wortley, associate professor, Centre of Criminology, University of Toronto, was the review team's lead researcher.*

United Kingdom Visit

The Co-Chairs and representatives from the City of Toronto and United Way Toronto, the two partners in the review, visited the United Kingdom from April 5 to 12, 2008. Thanks largely to the assistance of James R. Wright, High Commissioner for Canada, they met with government and civic officials who have been instrumental in Britain's struggle with social exclusion, community development and violence involving youth.

Organizations that met with the Co-Chairs:

Cabinet Office, Home Affairs Team, Strategy Unit
Department for Children, Schools and Families
Department of Communities and Local Government
Equality and Human Rights Commission
Home Office Anti-Social Behaviour and Crime Prevention Unit
Institute for Public Policy Research
Metropolitan Police Service, New Scotland Yard
Nacro, the crime reduction charity
Social Exclusion Task Force
Tower Hamlets Partnership
Youth Justice Board

Individuals the Co-Chairs met:

Mike Ainsworth, RCJU, OCJR, Home Office
Rachel Cerfontyne
Jeremy Crook, OBE
Jennifer Francis
Laurie Ince
Dame Mavis McDonald, DCB
Alan Riddell
Matthew Scott
Lord Andrew Turnbull, KCB, CVO
Claire Tyler
Julia Wolton, Youth Worker

Appendix 3:

Synopses of Previous Reports

Alberta's Crime Reduction and Safe Communities Task Force (2007). *Keeping Communities Safe: Report and Recommendations of Alberta's Crime Reduction and Safe Communities Task Force*. Edmonton: Government of Alberta.

The Justice Minister and Attorney General of Alberta established a task force to make recommendations on effective ways to reduce crime, make Alberta's communities safer and improve public confidence in the criminal justice system. After a six-month study and public consultations, the task force set out recommendations for a provincial crime prevention strategy. With respect to youth, the task force recommended targeted pilot projects for comprehensive, community-based services for at-risk youth and their families, and education for children and youth to reduce the risk of their involvement in gangs, drugs, violence or other crime. Expanding access to specialized courts for youth was also recommended, as well as improved availability of drug treatment, a central source of information for families and better access to mental health treatment with extension of the mandatory treatment period. Three-year funding was recommended for agencies showing positive results. The task force also encouraged municipalities to develop safe communities strategies.

Archibald, B. (1989). Report of the Royal Commission on the Donald Marshall, Jr. Prosecution. Vol. 6 *Prosecuting Officers and the Administration of Justice in Nova Scotia: A Research Study*. Halifax: Government of Nova Scotia.

Law professor Bruce Archibald led a working group that researched and made recommendations on the administration of justice in Nova Scotia as part of the Royal Commission on the Donald Marshall, Jr. Prosecution (see "Royal Commission"). The report recommended a computerized system of data collection for the criminal justice system to make it possible to monitor and evaluate its performance. It also recommended expanded diversion and sentencing options and focused on measures to eliminate the disadvantages inherent in the justice system for Aboriginal and Black Nova Scotians

Brodeur, J-P. (1991). *Access to Justice and Equality of Treatment*. Ottawa: Law Reform Commission of Canada

University of Montreal criminology professor Jean-Paul Brodeur reviewed eight previous reports touching on access to justice for minorities for the Law Reform Commission of Canada. His report illustrated that inquiries and commissions had repeatedly made similar recommendations on this issue.

Canadian Bar Association (1993). *Touchstones for Change: Equality, Diversity and Accountability*. Report of the Task Force on Gender Equality. Toronto: Canadian Bar Association

The Canadian Bar Association Task Force on Gender Equality set out to examine and report on gender equality issues. A number of recommendations also touched on barriers minorities encounter in the legal profession, including that the association should annually analyze the status of women and minorities in leadership positions in the association.

Canadian Criminal Justice Association (1989). *Safer Communities: A Social Strategy for Crime Prevention in Canada*. Canadian Journal of Criminology, 31 (August), 4–23

In association with major national organizations concerned with policing, social development, children and youth, natives and municipalities, the Canadian Criminal Justice Association set out a strategy for crime prevention calling for all levels of government, police, citizens, voluntary organizations and private enterprise to take responsibility. It recommended targeted improvements in social services, housing, education, employment and race relations as ways to reduce crime.

Carter, G. (1979). Report to the Civic Authorities of Metropolitan Toronto and its Citizens. Toronto: Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto.

The Council of Metropolitan Toronto asked Gerald Emmett Cardinal Carter, Catholic Archbishop of Toronto, to act as a mediator or conciliator between the civic authorities, in particular the police and minority groups in the city. After seven weeks of consultations with the authorities and numerous community groups, Cardinal Carter submitted his findings and recommendations. His recommendations focused on anti-racism education, positive contact between the police and citizens, and an independent mechanism for citizen complaints about the police.

Clark, S. (1989). Research study prepared for the Report of the Royal Commission on the Donald Marshall, Jr. Prosecution. Vol. 3 *The Mi'kmaq and Criminal Justice in Nova Scotia*. Halifax: Government of Nova Scotia

In a research study for the Royal Commission on the Donald Marshall, Jr. Prosecution (see "Royal Commission"), Scott Clark focused on alleviating discrimination toward Aboriginal people within Nova Scotia's criminal justice system. His report contained numerous recommendations for reforms to the criminal justice system generally. Recommendations related specifically to youth included alternative sentencing and diversion measures.

Cole, D., and M. Gittens (1994). *Racism Behind Bars: The Treatment of Black and Other Racial Minority Prisoners in Ontario Prisons*. Interim Report of the Commission on Systemic Racism in the Ontario Criminal Justice System. Toronto: Government of Ontario

——— (1995). Report of the Commission on Systemic Racism in the Ontario Criminal Justice System. Toronto: Government of Ontario

The Government of Ontario established the Commission on Systemic Racism in the Ontario Criminal Justice System to examine the procedures, practices, policies and processes that may cause or reflect systemic racism in the institutions of the criminal justice system. In their interim report (1994), Co-Chairs David Cole and Margaret Gittens examined Ontario's prison system. Their recommendations included several measures relating to the detention of youth, including alternative sentencing and diversion measures. Their final report (1995) addressed the entire criminal justice system and included recommendations for community policing reforms, bail conditions, anti-racism education for all criminal justice occupations, a confidential complaints mechanism, formal monitoring of the treatment of racial minorities in the criminal justice system and amendments to the *Young Offenders Act* to provide for alternative sentencing.

Cooke, D., and J. Finlay (2007). *Office of Child and Family Advocacy Review of Open Detention and Open Custody in Ontario*. Toronto: Government of Ontario

Ontario's Office of Child and Family Advocacy undertook a review of all of the open custody and open detention facilities in the province. They systematically gathered information about youth perceptions of the care they received while in custody. Based on the findings of that review, Diana Cooke (advocacy officer) and Judy Finlay (chief advocate) made recommendations for improvements. The authors proposed that facilities should reposition themselves as "reintegration specialists," and that life skills and vocational training for youth should be an integral part of the reintegration plan for individual youths. They also recommended regular review of basic care facilities and policies, enhanced supervision to ensure safety, respect for privacy rights, family access, reintegration plans and maximized services for youth with special needs.

Etherington, B., W. Bogart, M. Irish, and G. Stewart (1991). *Preserving Identity by Having Many Identities: A Report on Multiculturalism and Justice*. Windsor Law School Roundtable. Windsor: Faculty of Law, University of Windsor

The authors reported on a round table held at the University of Windsor's faculty of law. The recommendations arising from the discussion included the need for research on the representation of visible minorities in the criminal justice system. Research on whether racial discrimination is a factor in the treatment of individuals within the system was also called for, which would include gathering data on the racial or ethnic background of those accused, arrested or convicted. The participants recommended that research similarly be undertaken on the representation of racial or cultural minorities in the police services. Further recommendations dealt with police recruitment programs, cross-cultural and race-relations training for individuals working in the criminal justice system, and research on the exercise of prosecutorial discretion.

Four-Level Government/African Canadian Community Working Group (1992). *Towards a New Beginning: The Report and Action Plan of the Four-Level Government/African Canadian Working Group*. Toronto: African Canadian Community Working Group

Federal, Ontario, City of Toronto and Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto officials and members of Toronto's Black community formed a working group to formulate proposals for specific strategies to address the concerns of the Black community with respect to justice, social services, education, youth and policing. Based on a series of consultations and an examination of previous studies, the working group presented an action plan to address those concerns. The action plan covered accelerated efforts to appoint Black individuals to the judiciary, anti-racism training at all levels of the criminal justice system, recruitment of Black police officers and outreach to the Black community by the police services.

Gibson Smith, C. (1994). *Proud but Cautious: Homophobic Abuse in Nova Scotia*. Halifax: Nova Scotia Public Interest Research Group

Carol Gibson Smith's report provided an extensive analysis of discrimination toward lesbian, gay and bisexual individuals in Nova Scotia based on data collected through a survey of close to 300 people. The recommendations related to Nova Scotia's Human Rights Commission included outreach to the lesbian, gay and bisexual communities, creating a publication detailing the rights of individuals in those communities, and hiring human rights officers with expertise in homophobia and in working with gay, lesbian and bisexual people. The report further recommended that all school boards, colleges and universities develop a zero-tolerance policy with respect to violence.

Hamilton, A., and C. Sinclair (1991). Report of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry of Manitoba. Volume 1: *The Justice System and Aboriginal People*. Winnipeg: Government of Manitoba

The Government of Manitoba established the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry in 1988 in response to two incidents. The first was the 1987 trial of two men for the murder of Helen Betty Osborne. The trial did not take place until 16 years after the murder. The second was the death in 1988 of John Joseph Harper, executive director of the Island Lake Tribal Council, following an encounter with a City of Winnipeg police officer. The inquiry recommended that an Aboriginal justice institute be created and that the federal and provincial governments recognize the right of Aboriginal peoples to establish their own justice systems. Recommendations specific to Aboriginal youth included that police should in all cases consider alternatives to the laying of charges and that police departments should designate youth specialists and provide specialized training to all officers dealing with youth. Amendments to the *Young Offenders Act* were recommended, including rescinding the provisions allowing young offenders to waive the right to have a parent or guardian present during questioning and allowing youth to be transferred to adult court for trial. The commission proposed that judges designate a specific place of custody for young offenders, and that open custody and wilderness training camps be established for Aboriginal youth, especially near Aboriginal communities. Further recommendations related to youth dealt with support for youth justice committees, Aboriginal-focused diversion and alternative measures programs, community involvement in recommendations for sentencing and sanctions originating from, and enforced by, the community.

Head, W., and D. Clairmont (1989). Research study prepared for the Royal Commission on the Donald Marshall, Jr. Prosecution. Vol. 4 *Discrimination against Blacks in Nova Scotia: The Criminal Justice System*. Halifax: Government of Nova Scotia

Wilson Head and Don Clairmont conducted a research study for the Royal Commission on the Donald Marshall, Jr. Prosecution (see "Royal Commission") on systemic discrimination toward Black people in Nova Scotia's criminal justice system. Their recommendations included race-relations training for the police and training in Charter and human rights for individuals. They also addressed recruitment policies for criminal justice occupations and improvements to the system of dealing with citizen complaints against the police and the courts.

House of Commons (1984). *Equality Now!* Report of the Special Committee on Visible Minorities in Canadian Society. Ottawa: Government of Canada

A committee of Liberal, Conservative and New Democrat members of Parliament, chaired by MP Bob Daudlin, was formed as a parliamentary task force to examine the participation of visible minorities in Canadian society. After hearing witnesses and receiving submissions from numerous Canadian communities, the committee made 80 recommendations dealing with social integration, employment, public policy, justice, the media and education.

Joyette, D., and M. Oda (2005). *Black Creek West Community Capacity Building Project: Towards Resource & Capacity Development Action Plan.* Toronto: Joyette Consulting Services

This report identified aspects of socio-economic need and vulnerability, along with resources and capacities in the Black Creek West community of Toronto. The action plan set out in the report made proposals in strategic directions identified during the process, including promoting economic independence and stability, development of services, community involvement in decision-making, enhanced information and services, showcasing the community, and the need for healthy, safe and esthetic spaces and facilities.

Law Reform Commission of Canada (1991). *Report on Aboriginal Peoples and Criminal Justice: Equality, Respect and the Search for Justice* (Report 34). Ottawa: Law Reform Commission of Canada

The Law Reform Commission concluded that Aboriginal peoples should have the authority to establish Aboriginal justice systems. Recommendations included bringing more Aboriginal people into all occupations within the justice system and expanding cross-cultural training for all individuals currently working in the justice system. The recommendations also addressed alternative sentencing and community involvement in advising on sentences.

Law Society of British Columbia Gender Bias Committee (1992). *Report on Gender Equality in the Justice System*, Vols. 1 and 2. Vancouver: Law Society of British Columbia

The Law Society of British Columbia's Gender Bias Committee made recommendations for improving equality for women in British Columbia's justice system, but several of the recommendations also touched upon minorities. These included the recommendation that the Attorney General of British Columbia consider ways of enhancing the representation of women and minorities on the Judicial Council.

LeSage, P. (2005). *Report on the Police Complaints System in Ontario.* Toronto: Government of Ontario

The Government of Ontario asked the Hon. Patrick LeSage to advise it on the development of a model for resolving public complaints about the police. After consulting widely with interested parties, Justice LeSage set out a series of systemic changes, including civilian oversight and monitoring of the complaints process through the mechanism of a complaints body, headed by a civilian who had not been a police officer and informed by community/police advisory groups in each region.

Lewis, C. (1992). *Report of the Race Relations and Policing Task Force.* Toronto: Government of Ontario

The Race Relations and Policing Task Force originally reported in 1989. Following a recommendation in Stephen Lewis's *Report on Race Relations in Ontario* (see "Lewis, S."), the task force was reconstituted under the Hon. Clare Lewis to assess the implementation of recommendations from the original report and to make further recommendations if necessary. In his 1992 report, Mr. Lewis recommended further measures, including community policing with a defined anti-racism component, enhanced recruitment policies, further anti-racism education for police officers and community involvement in establishing the components of anti-racism training.

Lewis, S. (1992). *Report on Race Relations in Ontario.* Toronto: Government of Ontario

In 1992, the fatal Los Angeles police shooting of a young Black man, the eighth such shooting in three years, just days after the acquittal of Los Angeles police officers in the beating of Rodney King, led to demonstrations in Toronto that were characterized as riots. In the immediate aftermath, the Government of Ontario appointed Stephen Lewis, former leader of Ontario's New Democratic Party, to consult widely and advise the government on race relations. In his reports, Mr. Lewis urged the reconstitution of the Race Relations and Policing Task Force (see "Lewis, C.") and a race-relations audit for the police forces. He also made recommendations relating to the use of force by police and to enhanced police training. His report also addressed the issues of employment, education and the re-establishment of a Cabinet committee on race relations.

Linden, S. (2007). *Report of the Ipperwash Inquiry.* Toronto: Government of Ontario

The Ipperwash Inquiry was established to inquire into and report on events surrounding the death of Dudley George, who was fatally shot in 1995 during a protest by First Nations representatives at Ipperwash Provincial Park in Ontario. The inquiry was also mandated to make recommendations related to avoiding future violence in similar circumstances. In addition to recommendations related to treaty relations, natural resources, education and the resolution of land claims, the Hon. Sidney Linden made recommendations with respect to bias-free policing and First Nations police services.

He recommended that police services devote time and resources to building capacity to respond to Aboriginal protests and occupations; ensure that police leadership and officers are trained in Aboriginal history, law and customs; include Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal officers in an integrated peacekeeping approach; and improve consultation and outreach activities. He further recommended that the Government of Ontario issue a directive to all Ontario police services requiring police officers to report any incidents of racism or other culturally insensitive behaviour by other officers to supervisors.

Ma, S. (2004). *Just Listen to Me: Youth Voices on Violence.* Toronto: Government of Ontario Office of Child and Family Service Advocacy

The Ontario Office of Child and Family Service Advocacy organized a series of Youth Roundtable Discussions on Violence in 2004. Participant Stephanie Ma reported on the proceedings and recommendations arising from the round tables. The young people who participated recommended that youth be involved and engaged in anti-violence policies and programs, that violence prevention be taught in schools, and that sensitivity to diversity be promoted through revised curricula and initiatives to bring youth together for multicultural experiences in their communities.

McLeod, R. (1996). *A Report and Recommendations on Amendments to the* Police Services Act *Respecting Civilian Oversight of Police.* Toronto: Government of Ontario

Rod McLeod, QC, was asked to review civilian oversight of police in Ontario and advise the Attorney General and Solicitor General on ways to simplify the system to make it more efficient and effective. He recommended simplifying legislation, streamlining various civilian oversight bodies into one, establishing alternative locations for filing complaints and creating a mechanism for informal complaints resolution. Mr. McLeod also found, from a review of the literature and the submissions he received, that a continuing perception of systemic racism in policing existed in many racial minority communities.

National Crime Prevention Centre (2000). *National Strategy on Community Safety and Crime Prevention: Policy Framework for Addressing Crime Prevention and Children Ages 0 to 12.* Ottawa: Government of Canada

——— (2000). *National Strategy on Community Safety and Crime Prevention: Policy Framework for Addressing Crime Prevention and Youth Ages 12 to 18.* Ottawa: Government of Canada

From 1995 to 2000, the National Crime Prevention Centre/National Crime Prevention Council undertook a series of studies and consultations on the prevention of youth crime. In the two reports cited above, the centre set out comprehensive, multi-layered strategies to prevent childhood victimization and the early onset of criminal behaviour. The strategies addressed underlying societal factors, such as poverty and unemployment, as well as more immediate individual, family and community risk factors linked to crime prevention policy.

National Crime Prevention Council (1995). *Clear Limits and Real Opportunities: The Keys to Preventing Youth Crimes.* Ottawa: Government of Canada

——— (1997). *Preventing Crime by Investing in Families: An Integrated Approach to Promote Positive Outcomes in Children.* Ottawa: Government of Canada

——— (1997). *Preventing Crime by Investing in Families: Promoting Positive Outcomes in Children Six to Twelve.* Ottawa: Government of Canada

——— (1997). *Preventing Crime by Investing in Families and Communities: Promoting Positive Outcomes in Youth Twelve to Eighteen Years Old.* Ottawa: Government of Canada

In the four reports cited above, the National Crime Prevention Council developed models for the prevention of delinquency and crime generally and for three different age groups. The reports noted the combination of risk factors, which, if not balanced by protective factors, predispose children and youth to negative outcomes. The models stressed the need to address child poverty as part of any crime prevention strategy and the need to see children in a holistic way rather than isolating them from their living and learning contexts.

———, Economic Analysis Committee (1996). *Money Well Spent: Investing in Preventing Crime*. Ottawa: Government of Canada

In this report, the Economic Analysis Committee of the National Crime Prevention Council sought to demonstrate that crime prevention through social development is a cost-effective way of promoting personal and community security.

———, Youth Justice Committee (1995). *Mobilizing Political Will and Community Responsibility to Prevent Crime*. Ottawa: Government of Canada

The Youth Justice Committee of the National Crime Prevention Council consulted a range of people working with and for young people in Canada and consulted directly with young people, including those who had been in trouble with the law. The committee evaluated and suggested improvements to existing youth-oriented programs and youth-related crime prevention strategies.

Nova Scotia. (2007). *Our Kids Are Worth It: Strategy for Children and Youth*. Halifax: Government of Nova Scotia

In response to the findings and recommendations of the Nunn Commission (see "Nunn, M."), the Government of Nova Scotia formulated a comprehensive plan for creating a "well child system" through improving services and facilities, identifying and dealing with problems early in the life of the child, coordinating programs and services, and evaluating and reporting on the effectiveness of various projects.

Nova Scotia Department of Justice, Policy, Planning and Research (2006). *Perspectives on Youth Crime in Nova Scotia*. Halifax: Government of Nova Scotia

Responding to public concern about youth crime, the Planning and Research department of Nova Scotia's Justice Department compiled information on youth criminal activity and system responses to it. The report provided an overview of risk and protective factors, insights on effective interventions, and perspectives from government officials and others providing youth services. The authors observed that enforcement is not enough, and that crime and the causes of crime must both be addressed. The study concluded that risk factors are often interrelated and occur together, creating added risk, and therefore successful interventions must address multiple risk factors.

Nunn, M. (2006). *Spiralling Out of Control: Lessons Learned From a Boy in Trouble*. Report of the Nunn Commission of Inquiry. Halifax: Government of Nova Scotia

The Nunn Commission in Nova Scotia was established following the fatal injury of Theresa McEvoy in a car crash caused by a young person, Archie Billard, who had been released from custody just two days earlier. Retired Chief Justice Merlin Nunn was asked to investigate why Mr. Billard was released and examine the procedures and practices pertaining to the handling of the charges against him at the time of his release and thereafter. Commissioner Nunn's recommendations included separate courthouse facilities for youth matters, a standard approach to pretrial detention for young persons and the development of a comprehensive strategy to coordinate provincial programs, interventions, services and supports to children and youth at risk and their families.

Office for Children, Youth and Family Support (2004). *Action Plan for Young People*. Canberra: Australian Capital Territory Government

In 2004, the Australian Capital Territory Government launched a new framework focusing on young people, including young people at risk. A three-pronged approach was proposed involving enhancing support, providing more coordinated assistance and strengthening age-specific supports and services. Within each of these components, the government set out a series of strategies, including enhanced prevention and early intervention programs, the development of common case-management approaches throughout government and community organizations, a stronger focus on the effectiveness and evaluation of programs, improved transitions for young people between service systems, responsible information-sharing practices and enhanced awareness of privacy issues. The keys to success identified included supporting the individual young person, improving education and employment prospects, providing ongoing age-appropriate support, addressing multiple risk factors through holistic multidisciplinary approaches, and working with families, schools, and the community.

Ontario Human Rights Commission (2003). *Paying the Price: The Human Cost of Racial Profiling*. Inquiry Report. Toronto: Government of Ontario

The Ontario Human Rights Commission conducted a study of racial profiling in Ontario and recommended that all organizations and institutions entrusted with responsibility for public safety, security and protection monitor for and prevent racial profiling. The report also addressed anti-racism training for police and the recruitment of minorities by police services. The commission recommended that the police develop educational materials, particularly aimed at youth, to explain citizens' rights. It called for multicultural and anti-racism policies for school boards and for school curriculums to include anti-discrimination and diversity training.

Peterson, K. (1992). *The Justice House: Report of the Special Advisor on Gender Equality (to the Minister of Justice).* Yellowknife: Department of Justice, Northwest Territories

Katherine Peterson, Special Advisor on Gender Equality to the Minister of Justice of the Northwest Territories, studied the treatment of women in the justice system in the Northwest Territories. She recommended reforms pertaining to judicial appointments to render the judiciary more representative of the population and changes to school curricula to better reflect women. Her report also encouraged the government to research possible sentencing and conviction discrepancies between male and female young offenders and to research the causes of offending by young women.

Pitman, W. (1977). *Now Is Not Too* Late. Toronto: Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto

In 1977, in the wake of incidents of violence toward the South Asian community in Toronto, Chairman of Metro Council Paul Godfrey appointed Walter Pitman, then-president of Ryerson Polytechnical Institute, as a one-man "Task Force on Human Relations" to probe the issue of racism in the city. He found that a disturbing degree of racial tension existed in the city and that the city had not yet addressed the issue of racism directly. His recommendations focused on the role of the police, settlement services and schools, and set out measures to combat racism in each of these areas.

Race Relations and Policing Task Force (1989). *Report of the Race Relations and Policing Task Force.* Toronto: Government of Ontario

In response to concerns expressed by visible minority organizations about interactions between the police and members of their communities, then Solicitor General Joan Smith established a six-member task force to carry out an inquiry. The chair of the task force was Clare Lewis, then Ontario's public complaints commissioner (see "Lewis, C."). The task force gathered information from the police services, community organizations, institutions, associations and individuals, and reviewed previous reports and recommendations made to government. Each section of the report began with an apt quote, including one from the Carter report (see "Carter, G.") of 10 years earlier: "I must confess to a certain sense of déjà vu in this operation." The task force was "haunted by a sense of cynicism" throughout its deliberations, and concluded that it could only restate in the strongest possible terms, as others had before them, that the cycle of inaction must be broken. To that end, the task force report included 57 detailed recommendations, with specific deadlines and implementation criteria, in the areas of monitoring, hiring and promotion, race-relations training, use of force, community relations, First Nations peoples and police commissions.

Region of Peel Public Health (2006). *Peel Youth Violence Prevention: Toward a Bright Future*. Brampton: Region of Peel

The steering committee of the Peel Youth Violence Prevention Committee formed by Region of Peel Public Health included representatives from Peel Region's Regional Council, Peel Regional Police, the Health Department, schools and numerous community organizations. The committee studied youth violence in Peel, reviewed the region's existing programs, and developed strategic actions related to services and support for youth, community development, working with families, and education policy and programs.

Rolf, C. (1991). *Report of the Commission of Inquiry on Policing in Relation to the Blood Tribe*. Edmonton: Government of Alberta

The Government of Alberta appointed the Hon. C. Rolf as a one-man commission of inquiry to review and make recommendations on Blood Tribe police services in the province. The recommendations in Justice Rolf's report included reforms to protocols for cooperation among various police services, cross-cultural training for police officers, public legal education on the criminal justice system and community involvement in policing and cultural education.

Royal Commission on the Donald Marshall, Jr. Prosecution (1989). Report of the Royal Commission on the Donald Marshall, Jr. Prosecution. Vol. 1 *Commissioners' Report: Findings and Recommendations*. Halifax: Government of Nova Scotia

Donald Marshall, Jr., a young Mi'kmaq man, was prosecuted and wrongly convicted and imprisoned for the murder of William Sandford Seale in 1971. In 1986, the Government of Nova Scotia established a royal commission to inquire, investigate and report on these events. Chief Justice T. Alexander Hickman (chair), Chief Justice Lawrence Poitras and the Hon. Gregory Evans, QC, were appointed commissioners. The commission discharged its mandate through an expansive inquiry into the Nova Scotia justice system, its treatment of visible minorities, and the role of police and politicians within the system. In 1989, the commission released its seven-volume report: Vol. 1 *Commissioners' Report: Findings and Recommendations*; Vol. 2 *Public Policing in Nova Scotia*; Vol. 3 *The Mi'kmaq and Criminal Justice in Nova Scotia*; Vol. 4 *Discrimination Against Blacks in Nova Scotia: The Criminal Justice System: a research study*; Vol. 5 *Walking the Tightrope of Justice: An Examination of the Office of the Attorney General*; Vol. 6 *Prosecuting Officers and the Administration of Justice in Nova Scotia: a research study*; and Vol. 7 *Consultative Conference, November 24-26, 1988: edited transcript of proceedings*.

In the first volume, the commissioners made recommendations relating to reforming Nova Scotia's criminal justice system and the policies within its components to eliminate systemic bias. For example, they recommended that the Attorney General and Solicitor General adopt and publicize a policy on race relations, that a Cabinet committee on race relations be established, that visible minority judges and administrative board members be appointed whenever possible, that the Attorney General establish continuing education programs for Crown prosecutors, including material on the nature of systemic discrimination toward Black and Aboriginal peoples in Nova Scotia, and that all police training include content reflecting the concerns of visible minorities.

——— (1989). Vol. 2 *Public Policing in Nova Scotia*. Halifax: Government of Nova Scotia

Recommendations focused on policing included recruiting visible minorities for police forces using outreach recruitment methods, enhancing human and minority relations content in police training courses, especially for those whose first assignment will be in areas of high visible minority concentration, and formulating official policies regarding racism.

Safe Cities for Youth: A Culture of Smart Choices (2007, December 3). Conference report. Toronto: Department of Justice Canada, City of Toronto.
University of Toronto, Toronto

Funded by Justice Canada and organized by the City of Toronto's Community Safety Secretariat, this conference brought together about 250 people, including over 100 youth, to discuss four themes: youth engagement, the myths and realities of gangs, traditional and alternative approaches to justice, and culturally competent and multi-sectoral approaches to creating safer cities for youth. Recommendations arising from the event included providing long-term sustainable funding for youth programs, youth involvement in all aspects of programs and engaging youth to find out what motivates them. It was also recommended that "youth" be defined as under 29. The participants urged that, while it is important to understand risk factors, programs to address gang involvement be built on protective factors. The justice system, the participants felt, should be restorative rather than punitive. To support young children, a wraparound approach to services was recommended. The need for programs, skills and education, rather than more basketball courts, was highlighted, as well as the need for more police community liaison officers.

School Community Safety Advisory Panel (2008). *The Road to Health: A Final Report on School Safety*. Toronto: Toronto District School Board

The Toronto District School Board appointed the School Community Safety Advisory Panel in 2007, following the shooting death of 15-year-old student Jordan Manners inside C.W. Jefferys Collegiate Institute. The panel's goal was to understand the events leading to Jordan Manners' death and to make recommendations to prevent similar tragedies. In its four-volume report, the panel set out its findings and recommendations in 12 areas that it felt fundamentally affected the health of school environments: gender and school safety, barriers to reporting school safety issues, tracking violent incidents at schools, the breakdown in the relationship between students and teachers, the lack of youth activities, inadequate funding, lack of clarity regarding the role of trustees, discipline measures in schools, strategies for detecting and deterring safety threats, supports for students with complex needs, school safety concerns specific to Aboriginal students, and the relationship between safety and equity. The panel found it imperative to dismantle the culture created by the *Safe Schools Act* and to replace it with a new and inclusive concept of safety. Though this approach would include discipline, it would also be capable of operating beyond enforcement (see also "Toronto District School Board Safe and Compassionate Schools Task Force").

Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General (1988). *Taking Responsibility: Report of the Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General on its Review of Sentencing, Conditional Release and Related Aspects of Corrections.*
Ottawa: Government of Canada

Chaired by MP David Daubney, the Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General examined and presented findings and recommendations on government policy with respect to sentencing. This came in the wake of a protracted debate on reintroducing capital punishment in 1987. The committee took the view that criminal justice reforms must occur in a context responsive to the needs and interests of victims and the community. It examined public attitudes toward sentencing and identified areas of misunderstanding that contribute to lack of public confidence in the criminal justice system. The committee's proposals for sentencing and conditional release reform included providing better information to the public about sentencing objectives, developing alternative sentencing resources and alternatives to incarceration, providing feedback to the courts on the effectiveness of community sanctions, establishing better linkages between the criminal justice system and other services, promoting greater community participation in institutional programs, creating additional halfway houses, and ensuring that inmate transfers do not result in a loss of access to post-secondary education programs.

——— (1993). *Crime Prevention in Canada: Toward a National Strategy: Twelfth Report of the Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General.*
Ottawa: Government of Canada

Chaired by MP Dr. Robert Horner, the committee set out the components of an integrated crime prevention policy. Recommendations included federal support for a national crime prevention council and allocating a percentage of funds earmarked for the police, the courts and the correctional system to crime prevention measures (starting with one per cent and growing by one per cent per year to five per cent after five years). The committee also recommended that the federal government cooperate with the provinces, the territories and qualified professionals in promoting the prevention of violence as an integral part of elementary and secondary school curricula in Canada.

Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology (2006). *Out of the Shadows at Last: Transforming Mental Health, Mental Illness and Addiction Services in Canada*. Ottawa: Senate of Canada

The Standing Senate Committee, under the chairmanship of the Hon. Michael Kirby, consulted with mental health professionals and heard more than 2,000 personal stories related to mental illness in the course of its extensive policy study. In its chapter on children and youth, the committee expressed deep concern about the ability of the mental health system to respond to the needs of young people. The committee called for a much greater investment in children's mental health and for the restructuring of the system on an urgent basis. Its recommendations included changes to age cut-offs for programs and transitions from youth to adult services to avoid gaps, where individuals would be ineligible for treatment in either system. In that way, services would be based on clinical needs rather than on budgetary or bureaucratic considerations.

Task Force on the Criminal Justice System and its Impact on the Indian and Métis People of Alberta (1991). *Justice on Trial: Report of the Task Force on the Criminal Justice System and its Impact on the Indian and Métis People of Alberta* (Cawsey Report). Edmonton: Government of Alberta

Concerns about the disproportional number of Aboriginals in Alberta's correctional institutions and the treatment of Aboriginal people within the criminal justice system prompted the establishment of a task force to examine the issue. Through a consultative process, the task force looked at the criminal justice system in the province and its impact on Aboriginal and Métis people. With reference to crime prevention and policing, the task force recommended initial and refresher cultural and anti-racism training for police officers, including the stipulation that cultural training be delivered by members of the relevant community. The task force called for concerted efforts to recruit Aboriginal people to the police force, for officers to spend time in Aboriginal communities in a non-enforcement capacity, and for public legal education and community outreach on the justice system. It was recommended that crime prevention and other proactive police initiatives have the same weight as other activities in assessing the police workload, and that crime prevention programs be initiated by communities.

The Griffin Centre (2005). *Jane Finch Neighbourhood Action Plan Report.*
Toronto: City of Toronto

The City of Toronto provided funding for the Griffin Centre to work with the Jane Finch community to develop a youth services strategy. The strategy developed was based on a literature review, a youth-led research project, a community needs assessment and a case study of a successful local youth organization. The key findings in the resulting report pointed to the need for more sustainable services for youth, strategies to address the discordant relationships between youth and police and youth and the school system, and better coordination of services to the community. The plan called for investment in new social infrastructure and investment in helping local citizens and community groups become active participants in the development of solutions to local problems. The report also highlighted the need for more outreach and more youth outreach workers, youth mentors, peer education, early intervention, multi-disciplinary approaches and the development of crisis response protocols.

Toronto District School Board Task Force on Safe and Compassionate Schools (2004).
Report: Task Force on Safe and Compassionate Schools.
Toronto: Toronto District School Board

Following the implementation of policies flowing from the introduction of the *Safe Schools Act* in 2001-02, the Toronto District School Board formed a task force in December 2003, chaired by Julian Falconer, to assess the effectiveness of the board's policies. The task force felt that the *Safe Schools Act* should be repealed. It recommended that the board collect and analyze statistics on expulsions and suspensions to begin to address inequities, develop mandatory programs for suspended and expelled students and ban suspensions for children in kindergarten through Grade 3. It further recommended that staff involved in disciplinary action receive cultural awareness, equity and anti-racism training. More than 500 anti-bullying and preventative programs were found to exist, and the task force recommended that a much smaller number of programs, having been evaluated and found effective, should operate in all schools. The task force called for restoring lunch room supervisors, child care workers, youth support workers, attendance counsellors, hall monitors, caretakers, community liaison workers and education assistants to schools, and urged that a way be found to provide study support after school hours (see "School Community Safety Advisory Panel").

Tymchak, M., & Saskatchewan Instructional Development & Research Unit (2001). *Toward a New School, Community and Human Service Partnership in Saskatchewan. Final Report of the Task Force and Public Dialogue on the Role of the School to the Minister of Education of Saskatchewan.* Regina: Government of Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan's Task Force and Public Dialogue on the Role of the School, chaired by Dr. Michael Tymchak, proposed a new educational framework built on an integrated services model (referred to as School$^{\text{PLUS}}$). Under the new framework, all schools would adopt a community school philosophy. Responsibility for School$^{\text{PLUS}}$ would go to all human services departments and their agencies, including social services, health, justice and education, and to community organizations. Services to children and youth would be delivered in an integrated, school-linked and, where possible, school-based environment. Where sentences for youth included school attendance, the justice system would ensure followup and the provision of appropriate background information to school division officials. Educational opportunities for troubled youth in institutional settings would be provided within the School$^{\text{PLUS}}$ framework. The Government of Saskatchewan accepted the recommendations and adopted the School$^{\text{PLUS}}$ concept.

Ubale, B. (1977). *Equal Opportunity and Public Policy: A Report on Concerns of the South Asian Canadian Community Regarding Their Place in the Canadian Mosaic.* Submitted to the Attorney General of Ontario

The late 1970s saw an escalating number of increasingly violent attacks on South Asian Canadians in Toronto. In 1977, members of the South Asian community, the Human Rights Commission, the Metropolitan Toronto Police Department and the Ministry of the Attorney General were brought together to discuss the situation, chaired by then Attorney General Roy McMurtry. Following that meeting, Indian Immigrant Aid Service, together with other South Asian organizations, asked Dr. Bhausaheb Ubale to undertake an investigation and consultations with the diverse South Asian community in the Toronto area and produce a unified submission and recommendations for the Attorney General. Dr. Ubale examined the reasons for and the manifestations of racism at every level of society and proposed a comprehensive set of policy reforms. He recommended that police receive training in the implications of a multiracial society, recruit more non-white applicants at senior levels, and introduce psychological testing to screen for racial prejudice. Dr. Ubale proposed that teacher training and school curricula should be reorganized to be more inclusive of the historical and cultural contribution of Asia and Third World countries and to eliminate stereotypes.

He included several recommendations for government policy measures to combat racism, as well as policy proposals for the business sector, trade unions, professional bodies, the media and universities. Finally, he pointed out that race relations is a two-way process and suggested that South Asian communities would also have to take action to facilitate their integration into Canadian society. As a framework for implementing the proposed policy reforms, Dr. Ubale suggested changes to the structure of the Human Rights Commission or the option of a new institution to be responsible for community relations and research.

The Government of Ontario responded to Dr. Ubale's report with *Forward Together: A Statement of the Position of Ontario on the Issues Raised in the Ubale Report on the Concerns of the South Asian Community*, which outlined the ways in which Dr. Ubale's recommendations were being implemented in the areas of the administration of justice, education, employment, multiculturalism and other issues. Dr. Ubale was subsequently appointed commissioner of the Human Rights Commission, with additional responsibility as the province's first race-relations commissioner.

Urban Alliance on Race Relations (1993, March 26). *Conference report: The Justice System: Is It Serving or Failing Minorities?* The Canadian Bar Association–Ontario, The Law Society of Upper Canada, the Ontario Women's Directorate and the Ministry of the Attorney General. Osgoode Hall, Toronto

The Urban Alliance on Race Relations conference examined the manner in which the legal and justice system affects women, Aboriginal peoples and racial minorities, and developed policy recommendations. The report on the conference proceedings noted recommendations regarding immigration, including educating immigration officers about human rights abuses in countries of origin and preventing race-related crime issues from influencing individual immigration decisions. With respect to Charter rights, recommendations included establishing a racial minority, community-based legal clinic to uncover systemic racism through test cases and research. Recommendations regarding the justice system centred on examining courtroom procedures and the discretionary use of power by justice officials; examining police use of force to determine whether it varies by race, gender and socio-economics status; community-specific legal and supplementary services; and enhanced legal protection for Aboriginal and racial minority women. Further recommendations dealt with police accountability and training and jury participation by minorities.

Warner, R., and Grassroots Youth Collaborative (2005). *Youth on Youth: Grassroots Youth Collaborative on Youth Led Organizing in the City of Toronto*. Toronto: Ontario Region of the Department of Canadian Heritage

The Grassroots Youth Collaborative consists of youth-led, non-profit, community-based organizations in the Greater Toronto Area. The Ontario Region of the Department of Canadian Heritage funded a project for the collaborative to conduct a series of focus groups and interviews with front-line youth workers and to report findings and recommendations. Recommendations related to organizations serving youth included support for youth-led organizations and programming, in which youth staff reflect the ethnic, race, class and gender composition of the community. A long-term, prevention-focused community development approach to youth programming was also recommended, and the report highlighted the importance of increasing sustainability through diversified revenue streams. The use of the arts and popular culture to engage youth was presented as a key strategy. The recommendations envisioned capacity-building through partnerships, including cooperation with adults and adult-run organizations for ongoing transfer of knowledge, skills and expertise. Funding agencies and policy-makers were urged to make a greater investment in youth and in youth-led organizations and programs and to ensure better representation of youth, women and minorities in decision-making positions in government and funding agencies.

Youth Networking Forum (2006, January 20). Conference report. City of Toronto. City Hall, Toronto

The City of Toronto held a forum for 33 organizations that had received funding for youth-oriented projects through Access, Equity and Humans Rights Grants from the Community Partnerships and Investment Program. The purpose was to evaluate existing initiatives and propose others. Key messages derived from feedback on the forum were that "by youth, for youth" initiatives should be supported; that core and sustainable funding should be dedicated to planning and delivering youth programs; that youth-to-youth mentorship and leadership should be supported; and that stable funding for race-relations education, anti-oppression initiatives, and programs to combat systemic racism should be available. The participants urged repeal of the *Safe Schools Act* and elimination of zero-tolerance policies in schools. They saw a need for increased availability of affordable meeting spaces for youth and for more support for youth organization capacity-building. Meaningful long-term vocational/skills-training programs for youth were also considered important. A final key message was that the participants had attended many such forums and had heard much of the information before.

Appendix 4:

Program Inventory Template

Review of the Roots of Youth Violence — Ministry Program Information Template

1. Name of Program

2. Name of Funding Ministry

3. Name of Organization Delivering or Running Program

1. Ontario Government
2. Other (please specify)

4. Contact Information

Please provide information on the person(s) most directly involved with the delivery or operation of this program. This might include a government official or a Program Director from the community. Please provide as much information as possible, including the person's name, phone number, email address, mailing address and the program website.

5. Type of Funding

1. One Year Pilot Project
2. Funding for Multiple Years (specify no. of years):
3. Permanent Program
4. Other (specify):

6. Other Funders

Besides Ministry funding, does this program receive funding from any other sources? If so, please list these sources below.

7. Program Goals and Objectives

Below are listed a number of possible program goals or objectives. PLEASE INDICATE (either by highlighting or by inserting a check-mark) ALL of the goals or objectives that apply to this program.

Child Development

1. Provide assistance to parents for early childhood development
2. Provide general assistance to disadvantaged families

Youth Violence

1. Law enforcement/crime suppression
2. The prevention of youth violence and/or criminal behaviour
3. Diversion from the formal youth or criminal justice system
4. General rehabilitation or treatment for known offenders
5. Drug or alcohol treatment
6. Provides parents with support in working with youth to reduce violence.

Youth/Youth at Risk

1. Improve levels of youth engagement
2. Provide counseling for youth with personal problems or issues
3. Assist youth with mental health issues
4. Provide sports or recreational activities
5. Provide arts or culture activities/training
6. Improve relationships between young people
7. Improve relationships between adults and young people.
8. Reduce or eliminate racism
9. Contribute to general community development
10. Provide training/support for parents dealing with youth/youth violence
11. Provide training in conflict resolution
12. Provide healthcare or health information
13. Provide shelter, food or clothing to youth

Creating Educational and Employment Opportunities for Young People

1. Provide educational assistance or enhancement
2. Reduce youth drop-out rates
3. Provide job training
4. Provide employment for young people
5. Provide mentorship or role models for youth

Does this program have any other goals or objectives that are not described by the list above? If yes, please describe these goals or objectives in the space below.

8. Program Description

Please provide a brief description of the program. Please provide details about how the program operates. Please note that this section requests a description of general program activities not program effectiveness

9. Funding Period

In what year was this program first funded? ______________(Year)

When did this program last receive funding? ______________(Year)

10. Program Funding

What was the actual spending for this program for 2006-2007?

1. ______________________ (Actual Spending)
2. Don't know

What is the budget for this program in 2007-2008?

1. ______________________ (Budget)
2. Don't know

What proportion of the annual budget for this program comes from the Ontario Government?

1. ______________________(Estimate from 1 to 100%)
2. Don't know

Comments related to program funding

11. Staff and Volunteer Numbers

During its last full year of operation, how many staff members did this program employ (in full time equivalent terms)?

1. ________________ (# of paid staff)
2. Don't know

During its last full year of operation, how many volunteers worked on the delivery of this program? Is there an estimate of volunteer hours?

1. ________________ (# of volunteers)
2. Don't know

12. Geographic Location of Program

Where does this program operate? Check all that apply:

1. Large city/cities -- over 500,000 population
2. Medium sized city/cities – 200,000 to 500,000 population
3. Small city/cities – 50,000 to 200,000 population
4. Towns – 5,000 and 50,000 population
5. Rural areas
6. Other (specify) ________________________________

How many different locations or neighborhoods does this program service? Please answer in the space below.

1. ______________________ (# of locations)
2. Don't know

Does this program operate in any of the following communities or neighbourhoods. Please circle all that apply.

1. Ottawa
2. Hamilton
3. Thunder Bay
4. Kitchener-Waterloo
5. Jane and Finch (Toronto)
6. Jamestown (Toronto)
7. Steeles-L'Amoureaux (Scarborough)
8. Kingston-Galloway (Scarborough)

13. Age Range of Participants

What is the age of the youngest participants in this program?

1. __________(Years)
2. Don't know

What is the age of the oldest participants?

1. __________________(Years)
2. Don't know

What is the average or typical age of program participants?

1. _____________(Average Age in Years)
2. Don't know

14. Number of Participants

How many youth take part in the program during an average or typical year?

1. ____________________(# of youth)
2. Don't know

How many youth took part in this program during its last full year of operation?

1. ____________________(# of youth)
2. Don't know

15. Duration of Program

On average, how long do young people stay involved with this program? How long does it take one participant to complete the program?

1. Don't Know/Not sure
2. Less than three months
3. From three to six months
4. From six months to nine months
5. From nine months to a year
6. More than a year
7. Program has no time limit (youth can participate for as long as they want)

COMMENTS:

16. Youth Involvement

Are youth involved in the in the design of this program?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know
4. Not applicable

Are youth involved in the delivery of this program?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know
4. Not applicable

Are youth involved in the administration of this program?

1. Yes
2. No
3. Don't know
4. Not applicable

If youth are involved in the design, delivery or administration of this program, please describe the nature of their involvement.

17. Program Coordination

Is this program coordinated with other services delivered by a government agency, or community group?

1. Yes (please specify) ______________________________
2. No
3. Don't know

Briefly describe the coordination mechanisms associated with this program. For example, what organizations, institutions or ministries are involved in the coordination or governance of this program?

How well is this coordination mechanism working? Could the coordination mechanism be improved? If so, how?

18. Program Outcomes

To date, what have been the major outcomes or accomplishments of this program?

19. Program Evaluation

Aside from financial evaluations or assessments, has this program been formally evaluated or reviewed? Please check all that apply:

1. Program has not yet been formally evaluated
2. Program has been evaluated by the program staff
3. Program has been evaluated by Ministry staff
4. Program has been evaluated by an outside consultant
5. Evaluation is in progress
5. Evaluation is now in planning stage
6. Don't know

To date, how many times has the program been formally evaluated or reviewed (aside from financial evaluations)? Please provide the number in the space provided below.

When was the last time the program was formally evaluated (aside from financial evaluations)?

1. Within the past year
2. Within the past two years
3. Within the past three years
4. More than three years ago
5. Program is currently being evaluated
6. Don't know

20. Evaluation Reports

The Review of the Roots of Youth Violence is very interested in reviewing the results of all relevant program evaluations (aside from financial evaluations). To your knowledge, has an evaluation (aside from financial evaluations) report been produced for this program?

1. YES – a final evaluation report has been produced
2. YES – a preliminary evaluation report has been produced
3. NO – an evaluation report has not yet been produced for this program
4. DON'T KNOW

If an evaluation report does exist, can a copy of this report be made available to the Review?

1. YES
2. NO (if no, please explain why in the space below)

21. Evaluation Design

Did the most recent evaluation of the program employ a "Pre-test/Post-test" methodological design to determine the actual effect of the program"?

1. YES
2. NO
3. Don't know
4. No evaluation study has been conducted

Did the most recent evaluation of the program employ a "Control Group" comparison?

1. YES
2. NO
3. Don't know
4. No evaluation study has been conducted

Did the most recent evaluation involve interviews with youth who had participated in the program?

1. YES
2. NO
3. Don't know
4. No evaluation study has been conducted

22. Description of Evaluation Efforts

In the space below, please provide a brief description of how the program was evaluated.

23. Positive Evaluation Results

Did the most recent program evaluation produce positive or optimistic results? In other words, what are the good things about this program? What appears to be working?

24. Program Challenges

Did the latest evaluation produce any negative results? In other works, are there any problems with the program or anything that does not seem to be working?

25. Final Comments

Thank you for your participation in this study. Do you have any other comments about this program that you would like to make? If yes, please provide these comments in the space below.

Appendix 5:

OnLine Survey Questions

Potential Root Causes of Youth Violence

Please consider the following list and for each item tell us whether you *strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree* that it is a potential cause of violence involving youth. You may also indicate that you have no opinion about an item.

1. Poverty

strongly agree somewhat agree somewhat disagree strongly disagree no opinion

2. Racism

strongly agree somewhat agree somewhat disagree strongly disagree no opinion

3. Inadequate housing

strongly agree somewhat agree somewhat disagree strongly disagree no opinion

4. Too lenient laws involving young people

strongly agree somewhat agree somewhat disagree strongly disagree no opinion

5. Lack of educational opportunities

strongly agree somewhat agree somewhat disagree strongly disagree no opinion

6. Lack of employment opportunities

strongly agree somewhat agree somewhat disagree strongly disagree no opinion

7. Pressure from friends to join gangs

strongly agree somewhat agree somewhat disagree strongly disagree no opinion

8. No positive role models at home

strongly agree somewhat agree somewhat disagree strongly disagree no opinion

9. Lack of recreation/sports/arts facilities/programs

strongly agree somewhat agree somewhat disagree strongly disagree no opinion

10. Too lenient sentencing by the Courts

strongly agree somewhat agree somewhat disagree strongly disagree no opinion

11. Violence portrayed in the entertainment and news media

strongly agree somewhat agree somewhat disagree strongly disagree no opinion

Are there other factors that you consider to be important root causes of youth violence? If so, please list them below:

The Impact of Violence Involving Youth in Your Neighbourhood

We would like your opinion about the impact that violence involving youth has had in your neighbourhood. Please indicate whether you *strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree* with each of the following statements. You may also indicate that you have no opinion about an item.

12. There is more violence involving youth in my neighbourhood now than there was five years ago.

strongly agree *somewhat agree* *somewhat disagree* *strongly disagree* *no opinion*

13. I am concerned about violence involving youth in my neighbourhood.

strongly agree *somewhat agree* *somewhat disagree* *strongly disagree* *no opinion*

14. Schools in my area are generally safe.

strongly agree *somewhat agree* *somewhat disagree* *strongly disagree* *no opinion*

Solutions: What's Working, What's Not

Now, we'd like to consider programs that you feel are helping to reduce violence involving youth in your neighbourhood. Please indicate whether you *strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree* with each of the following statements. You may also indicate that you have no opinion about an item.

15. Current programs offered by the government help at-risk youth and are making our communities safer.

strongly agree *somewhat agree* *somewhat disagree* *strongly disagree* *no opinion*

16. My community offers programs for youth apart from government programs (e.g., United Way, faith-based programs, private).

strongly agree *somewhat agree* *somewhat disagree* *strongly disagree* *no opinion*

17. Youth in my area have enough employment opportunities.

strongly agree *somewhat agree* *somewhat disagree* *strongly disagree* *no opinion*

18. Youth in my area have enough educational opportunities.

strongly agree *somewhat agree* *somewhat disagree* *strongly disagree* *no opinion*

19. Youth in my area have enough recreational opportunities.

strongly agree somewhat agree somewhat disagree strongly disagree no opinion

20. Youth in my area benefit from programs designed to prevent violence.

strongly agree somewhat agree somewhat disagree strongly disagree no opinion

The Role of Police and Courts

What, in your opinion, is the role of the police and the Courts in reducing violence involving youth in your neighbourhood. Please indicate whether you *strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree* with each of the following statements. You may also indicate that you have no opinion about an item.

21. More police officers in our neighbourhood would reduce violence involving youth.

strongly agree somewhat agree somewhat disagree strongly disagree no opinion

22. Police could reduce violence involving youth by visiting schools more often.

strongly agree somewhat agree somewhat disagree strongly disagree no opinion

23. Police should refer young people to social programs instead of arresting them.

strongly agree somewhat agree somewhat disagree strongly disagree no opinion

24. Courts could reduce violence involving youth by handing down longer sentences.

strongly agree somewhat agree somewhat disagree strongly disagree no opinion

The Role of Government

What, in your opinion, is the role of government (federal, provincial or municipal) in reducing violence involving youth in your neighbourhood. Please indicate whether you *strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree* with each of the following statements. You may also indicate that you have no opinion about an item.

25. Government should pass tougher laws that would provide longer sentences for young offenders.

strongly agree somewhat agree somewhat disagree strongly disagree no opinion

26. Governments should create employment and educational opportunities to address some of the main causes of youth violence.

strongly agree somewhat agree somewhat disagree strongly disagree no opinion

27. Governments should raise taxes to pay for programs that would be aimed at reducing violence involving youth, including providing more police officers, more Courts and more prisons.

strongly agree somewhat agree somewhat disagree strongly disagree no opinion

28. Governments should raise taxes to pay for programs that would be aimed at reducing violence involving youth, like more social workers, support for working mothers, and more rehabilitation opportunities.

strongly agree somewhat agree somewhat disagree strongly disagree no opinion

29. Improving coordination among governments would help with the planning and delivery of programs for youth.

strongly agree somewhat agree somewhat disagree strongly disagree no opinion

Role of Youth

What, in your opinion, is the role youth should play in designing strategies and programs to reduce violence involving youth in your neighbourhood. Please indicate whether you *strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree* with each of the following statements. You may also indicate that you have no opinion about an item.

30. Youth in my area help develop programs designed for them.

strongly agree *somewhat agree* *somewhat disagree* *strongly disagree* *no opinion*

31. Youth programs in my area are effectively monitored and developed on an ongoing basis.

strongly agree *somewhat agree* *somewhat disagree* *strongly disagree* *no opinion*

32. Youth in my area are positively engaged in community activities.

strongly agree *somewhat agree* *somewhat disagree* *strongly disagree* *no opinion*

Final Thoughts

Are there any other comments or ideas you would like to present to the Review of the Roots of Youth Violence, or any recommendations you believe the Review should make to the Premier?

About You

Any personal information you choose to provide is collected in compliance with section 38(2) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. Your information may be used to contact you regarding your comments but will not be released to any third party except with your permission.

The following information is for statistical use only.

Please provide the first three letters of your postal code ___ ___ ___

Please indicate your age:

Under 10 ___ 10 to 18 ___

19 to 28 ___ 29 to 36 ___

37 to 50 ___ 51-65 ___

Over 65 ___

What is the highest level of education you completed?

Still a high school student ___

Still a student in college/university___

Less than Grade 12 ___ Grade 12 ___

Graduated from college/university___

Graduate/Professional degree ___

Thank you for completing this survey

Appendix 6:

Discussion Guide Fall 2007

Note from the Co-Chairs...

In June 2007, the Premier asked us to lead a Review of the Roots of Youth Violence, and to report our findings and recommendations to him in May 2008.

Violence involving youth is a serious concern for families, communities, schools, governments and youth themselves. This Discussion Guide is designed to assist Ontarians to provide their views on such violence, and on the solutions to it. These views are extremely important to the work which the Premier asked us to lead.

Our review involves many complex and longstanding issues, including how structural inequality, concentrations of disadvantage and racism impact violence involving youth. These are not new issues for either of us. Our deep interest in finding responses to inequality, disadvantage and racism did not start with the Premier's request to us, and it will not end when we submit our report to him.

Our immediate task is to identify and analyze underlying factors contributing to youth violence, and to provide recommendations to help Ontario become a better province for all of its youth and communities.

We are seeking the advice of Ontarians because we believe that our review will lead to lasting change — change that will be built on the shared experiences, insights and wisdom that youth and others share with us.

Because of what is at stake for our youth and our communities, we urge you to contribute to our review's important work.

Roy McMurtry and Alvin Curling, Co-Chairs
Review of the Roots of Youth Violence

There are many ways that people define and think about violence involving youth. This Discussion Guide has been designed as a starting point, and it is intended to enable all respondents to provide the feedback that they believe best reflects the experience in their neighbourhood. The Review of the Roots of Youth Violence is open to, and hopes to hear, many points of view.

1. Describe the violence involving youth in your neighbourhood. What impact is it having?

2. What do you see as the roots of violence involving youth?

...think about the experiences that youth have:

• *In society* • *In the community* • *In school*

• *With friends and peers* • *With other youth* • *With family*

3. Tell us about what's happening in your neighbourhood to help address violence involving youth.

...think about:
• Outreach programs • Youth-led initiatives • Education • Employment
• Policing • Any other things that are happening in your neighbourhood

What's working? Why?

What's not working? Why?

4. What are the two or three most important things that could be done to address violence involving youth in your neighbourhood?

5. Describe the capacity that already exists in your neighbourhood to address violence involving youth (e.g., people, knowledge, programs, other resources that the community already has). What additional supports would help existing and proposed activities succeed?

What we have *(current capacity)*	What we need *(additional supports that would help)*

6. Beyond what can be accomplished locally in your neighbourhood, what do you think can be done across the province to address violence involving youth?

7. Do you have any other advice for the review?

Need more space? Feel free to attach additional pages.

About This Discussion Guide...

Roy McMurtry and Alvin Curling both have long and distinguished careers as leaders in the Province and in their communities — careers that include major roles addressing issues such as housing, justice, equality and anti-racism. Their successes have earned them the privilege and responsibility of co-chairing this review.

In the short time that they have to conduct this review, the Co-Chairs will visit eight neighbourhoods across Ontario. In each of these, a version of this discussion guide is being used to develop presentations that neighbourhood representatives will make to the Co-Chairs. All of this feedback will be documented and shared with the review.

The Co-Chairs recognize that many more people may wish to provide their comments and ideas to the review, and have therefore established both this website and a toll-free number, 1-888-750-7977. If you have comments or ideas, you might find it useful to use the questions in this Discussion Guide to frame your responses. You may mail the completed guide to

Submissions
Roots of Youth Violence Secretariat
2nd Floor, 880 Bay Street
Toronto, ON M7A 2B6

or you may send your responses by e-mail to RRYV@ontario.ca

Please note that it is an offence to publish or disclose to any person the name of a young person or any other information related to a young person if it would identify him/her as a young person who has been dealt with under the Youth Criminal Justice Act *or the* Young Offenders Act. *On this basis, we ask that you exercise extreme care not to include in your responses any information that would fall within these statutory prohibitions.*

Any personal information you choose to provide is collected in compliance with section 38(2) of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. *Your information may be used to contact you regarding your comments but will not be released to any third party except with your permission. If you have any questions please contact the Review of the Roots of Youth Violence Secretariat at1-888-750-7977 or e-mail us at RRYV@ontario.ca.*